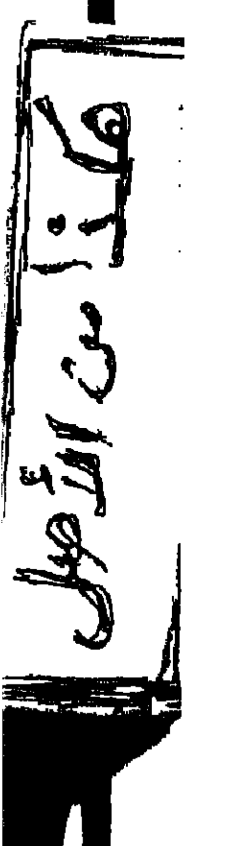


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DEPOSE A BRX X

After eight long years, hope comes to Gulf

Iran's position of military weakness plus constant pressure on both Iran and Iraq are two of the main reasons why, for the first time, a ceasefire seems a real prospect in the Gulf war. In this article for the Bonn daily, *Die Welt*, Lothar Rühl looks at what has been happening in the Gulf and why. Rühl is a state secretary at the Bonn Defence Ministry.

The prospect of a ceasefire between Iran and Iraq may not amount to a prospect of peace and an end to the Gulf War.

But for the first time sincefighting began, eight years ago in September, there is a possibility of interrupting armed hostilities and establishing a transitional state of affairs midway between war and peace in which international shipping in the Gulf need have no fear of being attacked by either side.

Without doubt [illegible] cease-fire on the basis of last year's UN Security Council resolution 598 would lay the groundwork for a political peace settlement. Iran's stated readiness to unconditionally accept the UN resolution may be the result of obscure Persian politics and the domestic condition of revolutio[illegible] would pose future obstacles to peace.

But for the time being the Iranian leaders have declared themselves agreeable to an armistice and to the United Nations paving the way for a peace settlement.

This success is definitely due in part to constant pressure on the belligerents for the past year by the permanent members of the UN Security Council and by other UN members.

But the most telling and immediate reason for Iranian readiness for a ceasefire will probably have been been Iran's military weakness at the end of its seventh year at war.

The military turning-point in the war was the failure of the Iranian offensive aimed at taking Basra between December 1986 and February 1987.

Iran was then thrown on to the defensive on the ground and no longer had the strength to launch fresh large-scale attacks on the southern front.

From then on Iraq had the military initiative. Iraqi air and missile raids hit Iran hard, especially its oil and energy production facilities.

This weakness has been very much apparent since the setbacks on the ground from last April and the failure of Iranian raids on shipping in the Gulf.

These raids may have caused damage but they took a heavy toll on Iran too – and failed to sever the sea links of Iraq, Kuwait and the other Gulf states.

It has taken the shape of a constant reduction in Iranian military activities and a progressive exhaustion of reserves and resources.

Iranian regular troops and militias on the 1,200-km land front are admitted by their new commander-in-chief, Majlis Speaker Rafsanjani, to have declined in both manpower and combat strength.

They have been forced under Iraqi pressure to withdraw and reconsolidate at various focal points along the front, with the result that all the Iranian border areas taken in costly Iranian offensives over the past few years have been lost.

In particular the loss of the Fao peninsula in the Shatt el Arab, the conquest of which, in bitter fighting and at the cost of heavy losses, was the most spectacular Iranian military success, put paid to many of Tehran's military options by depriving it of its operational base for an attack on Basra.

All Iranian offensives have taken a heavy blood toll and, in the final analysis, all were brought to a halt by the deep-set Iraqi defence lines.



(Cartoon: Behrendt/Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung)

In the foreseeable future Iran will lack the strength to launch further large-scale offensives, as has been borne out by the Iranian withdrawal from Iraqi territory near Halabja, about 25 miles west of the border in Kurdistan, and from territory near Zubaidat on the southern front.

These withdrawals under pressure were said in Tehran to be regroupings of

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IN THIS ISSUE

More than just propaganda in Warsaw speech

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov has long been a past master at portraying himself and his initiatives in a manner designed to achieve maximum media and public relations effect.

His latest proposals, made to the Polish parliament, and the statements by the political leaders of the seven Warsaw Pact states at the end of their Warsaw summit meeting made headline news in East and West.

As on previous occasions, they gained much more publicity than signals and calls made by Nato in recent months to Moscow and the East bloc in general.

One must admit that the Warsaw proposals are not solely intended for public relations or propaganda effect; they also contain a certain amount of substance.

Yet basically they cannot in any way be considered sensational. They are simply a reply by the Soviet Union and the entire Warsaw Pact to the many appeals made and initiatives launched by Nato.

At their Brussels summit meeting last March the heads of state and government of the 16 Nato member-countries endorsed a nine-page declaration on "Conventional Arms Control: The Way Ahead." It outlined the initial position, the problems involved and the objectives envisaged by the North Atlantic pact.

At the spring conference of Nato Defence Ministers, held in Brussels at the end of May, and Foreign Ministers, held in Madrid early in June, the West underlined its views on continuing with a comprehensive East-West dialogue and on disarmament and arms control talks.

At these talks and within the framework of European Political Cooperation (involving the 12 European Community countries, of which Ireland is not a Nato member) several declarations have been made on the situation and the outlook for an improvement in East-West ties in general.

Some observers may have wondered whether the West was not indulging in too much of a good thing, at least in terms of verbal outlay.

Nato has clearly outlined its views on the subject. It advocates following ratification of the INF Treaty on scrapping land-based medium-range missiles in Europe by reaching agreement without further delay on a Start Treaty halving the number of strategic missiles stockpiled by the two superpowers.

The West is also keen to reach agreement on the international elimination of chemical weapons. A balanced overall concept must also include a stable, appropriate balance of power in the conventional, non-nuclear sector, which must be given priority from the viewpoint of European members of the North Atlantic pact.

"The conventional imbalance in Europe continues to be at the centre of worries about European security," as the Nato summit communiqué put it at the beginning of March.

The communiqué also noted that "armed forces ought to serve the sole purpose of preventing war and ensuring self-defence, and not that of aggression or political and military intimidation."

The Western alliance also expressly pointed out that deterrence would, in the foreseeable future, call for "an appropriate mixture of nuclear and conventional forces."

Against this background the West can fairly assess some of the proposals made in Warsaw as a positive response to Nato initiatives and viewpoints.

The Soviet Union has, after all, already agreed in principle to the idea of an "asymmetrical reduction" in the conventional sector, thus acknowledging the East's clear superiority in, say, tanks and field artillery.

But that still leaves a long road ahead

Continued on page 2

■ WORLD AFFAIRS

Shifting sands of big-power politics bring hope to war-weary Angola

DIE ZEIT

The first good news out of Africa for a long time is that the war which has laid waste to Angola, a country rich in oil, gold, diamonds and coffee, for 13 years might come to an end and that Namibia, illegally occupied by South Africa for 22 years, might come a step nearer independence.

Fingers must still be crossed in connection with the news that the four parties who negotiated in New York — America, Cuba, Angola and South Africa — have agreed in principle on a document that has yet to be approved by their respective governments.

But there are grounds for hope. The document is headed Principles for a Peaceful Settlement in South-Western Africa. It contains, for the first time, proposals in writing for a Cuban withdrawal from Angola and a South African withdrawal from Namibia.

A Soviet observer was also present at the talks, held on an inhospitable island in the port of New York. Two parties who were not represented and may yet make difficulties are the rebel leaders Jonas Savimbi of Unita and Sam Nujoma of Swapo.

Was it really the first good news? Yes, for ages only bad news has come out of Africa. The population of the sub-Sahara region is expected to more than double from 415 milllion in 1985 to 840 million in 2005.

Per capita food output is already 15 per cent lower than in 1970, whereas *China and India are now self-supporting*.

The population exodus from the countryside to urban slums is twice as fast in Africa as anywhere else in the world. By the turn of the century about 42 per cent of Africa's population will be urban.

A further item of bad news is that roughly one in four of the world's 15 million refugees are in Africa.

The war in Angola, a country twice the size of the Federal Republic of Germany, is not a simple bush war. The latest weapons are in use.

The Luanda government has over 2,000 Soviet tanks, while Unita rebels fire US Stinger missiles at Soviet aircraft. They claim to have shot down 140 enemy aircraft last year and captured 50 tanks in recent months.

There have been 1,000 solemn pledges over the past 13 years of war. The South Africans swore never to grant Namibia independence as long as the Cubans remained in Angola, while the Luanda government said the Cubans must not leave until peace had been restored.

Is this all no longer to hold good? Can it be true? It can, for the simple reason that the superpowers have had enough.

After 13 years both sides have realised that no-one can win, neither the communist government in Angola, advised and supplied by the Russians, nor the demagogue and guerrilla leader Dr Savimbi, backed by South Africa and supported by the Americans.

Both superpowers have invested heavily over the years without achieving anything by way of results. No-one can win, but no-one can lose either.

The South Africans and their protégé Dr Savimbi realise President Reagan's days are numbered and that no matter who succeeds him they cannot expect the next US President to be such a generous and credulous patron.

For some time a Soviet policy change *in Africa has been in the making*, with the emphasis on political solutions rather than on armed struggle.

Moscow has even proposed security guarantees for the white minority in South Africa to relieve them of their anxiety.

Last but not least the Angolans, both the MPLA left-wingers in Luanda and the Unita right-wingers led by Dr Savimbi, have seen for themselves how a once rich country has been senselessly laid waste, with urban areas growing increasingly dilapidated and the people sinking deeper into poverty.

Nowhere in the world are there as many crippled children maimed by mines as in Angola.

The Americans, in constant raptures about human rights and freedom, and the Russians, with their credo of universal social justice, have set their sights firmly on superpower interests and done all manner of mischief in the world by intervening in regional conflicts.

In Vietnam the forests would not be defoliated and the ports not mined if the *superpowers had not intervened*, while the Angolans would surely long since called it quits and arrived at some compromise or other if they had been left to their own devices.

"How did it come about," I asked Jonas Savimbi in Bonn, "that after the hasty Portuguese withdrawal the three liberation movements whose leaders had for years jointly fought the colonial power did not stick together?" "We three — the MPLA, Unita and Roberto Holden's FNLA, which has since been disbanded, agreed with the Portuguese in the 1975 independence agreement signed at Alvor to jointly rule the country."

Although Unita was the strongest of the three groups it was, he says, unceremoniously bundled out of power when the Cubans arrived in Angola.

They arrived, he says, suddenly and unbeknown to the Russians who, however, promptly made use of the opportunity. Now numbering over 50,000, they defend the government and ruin the country, with $1,500 a month being paid for each Cuban soldier.

Angola earns $2bn a year from its oil, of which the Cubans are paid roughly $1.5bn and the remainder goes to the Soviet Union for weapons. The country itself derives no benefit from its oil revenues.

Apart from the Cubans Swapo, the anti-South African Namibian resistance movement, has 70,000 men and the African National Congress (ANC) 2,000 men in Angola, while the GDR now has only 600 advisers there.

In civilian clothes Dr Savimbi makes a much less martial impression than in the usual photographs. He is extremely well-versed politically, moderate and pragmatic in his assessment of the situation, and bold but not visionary to the point of wishful thinking in his expectations.

There are few black statesmen to rival him. He speaks three European languages, English, French and Portuguese, fluently. He studied in Lisbon, was forced to go into exile by the Portuguese secret police and took his PhD in Lausanne.

It is easy to imagine him carrying as much weight with President Reagan in the White House as he does as a freedom fighter in Angola.

At 54 he is by now probably the longest-serving freedom fighter in the world, having spent 15 years fighting the Portuguese and 13 years waging a civil war both sides fight with no holds barred.

Forty per cent of the country is held by Unita, he claims, proudly adding that this includes the entire infrastructure of schools, a postal service, hospitals and stores of essential consumer goods that are rationed and not sold for money.

Wages and salaries are not paid in Unita country. Money is not legal tender.

In this strange and seemingly primitive communist environment Dr Savimbi has set up as president of a government in exile and commander of a ferocious 60,000-man guerrilla army (his adversary, President dos Santos in Luanda, has 80,000 men under arms), he dreams of reconciliation and of a coalition government holding democratic elections and introducing a free-market economy.

For the time being this may seem wishful thinking, but the fact *remains* that he and his army exists *and* cannot simply be ignored in an Angolan settlement; he is bound to be one of the key figures in any such settlement.

The superpowers agreed on a deadline at the Moscow summit. By 29 September, they simply decreed, agreement must be reached on peace treaty terms. Events have since gained momentum, and the four parties are likely to meet again in early August.

The going will be toughest for South Africa, where local government elections are to be held on 26 October and President Botha is worried lest right-wing extremists accuse him of a Namibia sell-out and capitalise on this claim.

Yet for once Swapo's Sam Nujoma, an uncompromising leader the South Africans have for years dismissed as a root-and-branch communist with whom they will have no dealings, has yielded ground.

For the first time ever he advocated in Washington a ceasefire and a democratic solution, which would pave the way for independence. But as Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday has just shown, the South Africans are so *inflexible* and so hidebound by their anxiety neuroses that they are simply not in a position to make use of such opportunities as arise.

Angola is such a complicated problem, being linked to the no less complicated problem of Namibia, that it *is the* stuff of a dozen PhD theses.

In theory, given the large cast and their nuisance potential, no *solution* is conceivable. In practice *the* general weariness of war lends wings to hope.

The momentum of history is aimed at peace, and in Africa everything is always so totally different. As Dr Savimbi puts it: "Africa is how it is."

Marion Gräfin Dönhoff

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 22 July 1988)

Continued from page 1

to a specific and fully verifiable agreement.

In Nato the prevailing view is that the two sides ought soon to issue specific mandates for conventional arms reduction talks.

In the present circumstances representatives of most Nato states feel there would be little point in and scant benefit to be derived from holding an all-European summit conference or a conference of the 33 CSCE states plus the United States and Canada.

The third Helsinki review conference currently being held in Vienna is seen as a suitable forum for talks between the 23 (16 Nato and seven Warsaw Pact) states.

As long as the CSCE review conference fails to reach a conclusion, partly because it is blocked on human rights, the outlook for progress soon on conventional arms control talks as planned will remain bleak.

Initial plans for conventional arms reduction have already been drawn up. At the end of May the Bonn government submitted its concept to other Nato member-countries for discussion.

It provides for "common ceilings" (such as 14,000 main battle tanks, 7,500 armoured patrol cars, 7,500 heavy field guns and gradual reductions).

Expert discussions within the Western alliance are now under way. Given the detailed problems and the MBFR troop cut talks in Vienna, which have been in progress for nearly 15 years and have yet to arrive at a conclusion, there is a risk of the new round of conventional arms reduction talks being bogged down in details.

At Nato's political headquarters in Brussels and the pact's military headquarters, Shape, in Mons the aim continues to be that of arriving at a convincing overall concept for the Western alliance on the basis of the flexible response strategy.

This strategy dates back to the 1967 Harmel Report, but the concept envisaged must also bear subsequent trends in mind, not to mention requirements and challenges that lie ahead until and beyond the end of the century.

This task will be a first major test of the mettle of Manfred Wörner in his new job as Nato secretary-general.

It will be for him to ensure that the 16 Nato countries reach agreement on, for instance, such tricky issues as when and to what extent short-range nuclear weapons are to be modernised.

For the time being patience is required. The West for one must wait and see who will succeed Mr Reagan as US President. Moscow is biding its time in this respect too.

Hans-Peter Ott

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 19 July 1988)

The German Tribune

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■ HOME AFFAIRS

To jump or not to jump? That's one question around FDP leadership contest

In this article for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Fritz Ullrich Fack looks at the two candidates standing for the chairmanship of the Free Democrats, Frau Irmgard Adam-Schwaetzer and Count Otto Lambsdorff. The post is being left vacant by the departure of Herr Martin Bangemann, the Economics Minister, to Brussels.

The Free Democrats have no real reason to feel dissatisfied with nearly six years in coalition with the Christian Democrats in Bonn.

Between 1983 and 1987 they made gains in all but one state assembly election while their coalition allies just as regularly lost ground. And they improved their position in the general election in January 1987.

So is there no real reason for them to resign from the Bonn coalition? If the regular resurgence of debate within the party is any guide, the answer must be Yes.

Peace and quiet have been restored to some extent now the tax reform package has been approved, after lengthy labour pains, but to quit or not to quit remains the question.

It is still very much on the agenda because a new FDP leader is to be elected at the beginning of October and the choice will to some extent decide the shape of things to come.

The candidates, Count Otto Lambsdorff and Frau Irmgard Adam-Schwaetzer, are trying to play down this aspect of the poll. They are said to differ little politically and to be equally hard-nosed on coalition commitments.

In other words, both are resolved to wait and see how matters develop, politically and psephologically (in terms of political majorities), by 1990, the next general election not being due until November 1990.

The truth is another, somewhat different matter. Count Lambsdorff may have made a number of apparently dramatic statements about the Bonn coalition, saying the FDP's coalition alignments could well change between now and the end of the century.

But in principle he supports the coalition with the Christian Democrats. It was he, after all, who dealt the coalition with Helmut Schmidt's Social Democrats its death's blow in the autumn of 1982.

There is no getting away from this fact despite his at times vehement clashes with Bavarian Premier Franz Josef Strauss, the CSU leader — especially as the clashes are regularly engineered by both sides.

Frau Adam-Schwaetzer's views differ. Last spring she more than once gave free rein in private discussions to her criticism of the present FDP leader, Economic Affairs Minister Martin Bangemann.

One accusation she levelled at him was the claim, made by the Hamburg newsweekly *Der Spiegel*, that he was playing footsie with the Christian Democrats.

In legal and home affairs, on which there are growing differences of opinion within the coalition, she has come out in support of party left-wingers Gerhart Baum and Burkhard Hirsch.

She feels, for instance, that the ban on demonstrators wearing protective clothing that constitutes a disguise, one of the few home affairs issues on which the Christian and Free Democrats have come to terms, was a move the FDP would have done better not to make.

Closer scrutiny thus reveals that the candidates represent opposite wings of the party. The future of the coalition (beyond 1990, that is) will be decided first and foremost by election results and the permutations they make possible.

But they in turn will depend on the state in which the coalition faces the voters, and "post-Bangemann" FDP policy will play a leading role in this connection.

Chancellor Kohl still has what has been called a strategic majority in the Bundestag. In other words, the Free Democrats could only join forces with the SPD if they were prepared to accept the Greens as partners in a three-cornered SPD-FDP-Green coalition.

That may be out of the question, but the same cannot be said of strange-sounding plans that are being discussed by some Free Democrats for a possible premature withdrawal from the present coalition, which the FDP would merely tolerate until the next general election.

This is still a half-baked idea born of certain disappointments and need not be overrated, but it has a signal effect nonetheless, although it is hard to imagine Hans-Dietrich Genscher for one approving an idea that would cost him the Foreign Office he has headed for so many years.

Yet Chancellor Kohl can only be sure of his strategic majority until November 1990. Voters will then help to decide the further course of events.

Recent opinion polls seem to suggest that the Christian Democrats have steadily lost ground while the Social Democrats, with a certain degree of fluctuation, have gained ground.

This state of affairs could be entirely different in a year's time. Today's voters are much choosier and prone to float than their predecessors. They increasingly base their choice on the parties' presumed or proven ability to arrive at plausible solutions to political problems.

Regular, reliable voters are a slowly declining band, with surveys showing up to 40 per cent of voters base their support on apparent merit or proven performance.

This is the crux of the matter for the Kohl government. It has set itself two *tall legislative orders* by 1990, reforms of health insurance and the state pension scheme.

These are issues that would impose a heavy burden on even stabler coalitions.

With Count Lambsdorff at the FDP helm the coalition might conceivably agree to terms on both issues and see them through the Bundestag by 1990 despite the FDP independence he too is at pains to stress.

Frau Adam-Schwaetzer in contrast would probably be keen to stymie the two reform projects in order to demonstrate the Christian Democrats' incompetence — and there are many possibilities of inconspicuous behind-the-scenes foot-dragging.

That is why the FDP leadership vote in October is so important.

Count Lambsdorff, always assuming numerical strength made it possible might, even though he is not the easiest man to get on with, reasonably be expected to stay put with the present coalition.

It would in contrast not being doing Frau Adam-Schwaetzer an injustice to *imply that she might head for fresh* fields and pastures new should the opportunity arise.

Fritz Ullrich Fack

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 21 July 1988)

Continued from page 1

forces in new positions from which fresh attacks were to be launched, but in reality they were setbacks, with Iran compelled by lack of manpower and equipment to surrender terrain to the enemy.

That has de facto fulfilled one of the terms of UN resolution 598: the withdrawal by both sides to their respective internationally acknowledged borders.

Last spring Iraq achieved its paramount war objective of regaining lost territory and securing access to the Shatt el-Arab and the Gulf.

Neither may yet have been consolidated, but regaining border terrain is what counts first and foremost.

Disengagement of Iraqi and Iranian troops along the border may yet create difficulties, but an armistice can be concluded on the basis of this borderline.

A ceasefire between warring parties has repeatedly served as a substitute for a formal peace agreement in the Middle East and elsewhere in Asia over the past decades, making longstanding interim settlements possible without political agreement on peace terms.

This story could be repeated by Iran and Iraq in the Gulf. A dangerous hotspot would at all events have been cooled down if, after nearly eight years of fighting, one million victims and attacks on over 500 ships of all kinds in the Gulf, a ceasefire were to be agreed in a conflict of which the outcome is still undecided.

Lothar Rühl

(Die Welt, Bonn, 21 July 1988)

It's politicians, not politics, under attack

Bundestag Speaker Philipp Jenninger says the growing public mistrust of politicians is a "serious threat to parliamentary democracy."

He has raised a sensitive issue. But that alone is not enough. His warning avoids the real issue. It is not enough to draw attention to opinion polls according to which 62 per cent of Germans questioned had "little" confidence in politicians.

It is not enough to refer to a "credibility crisis of parliamentarianism." This definition is mistaken, and so is his entire approach to the argument.

His definition is wrong because neither the parliamentary system nor democracy in the Federal Republic are called into question.

Both enjoy firm public support. People mistrust not the system but the way in which politics is increasingly conducted. They mistrust the politicians.

The principle of representative parliamentary democracy may be affected, but only marginally, in that a majority of voters are loath to play the parliamentary game and switch sides, feeling that one party is as bad as the other.

That is why Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democrats are in the doldrums yet the Social Democrats still stand no real chance of a return to power in the near future.

Herr Jenninger's approach to the argument is also wrong in abstracting and depersonalising the problem by referring to a "threat" and to a "credibility crisis" of German democracy.

Who does he mean? Who is he appealing to? Who is to blame? The politicians or, in the final analysis, the voters? This dithering sounds suspiciously like an excuse.

When proposed increases in Hesse state assemblymen's salaries came under fire not one of the established political parties in Bonn was prepared to comment. None, from the CSU to the SPD, would risk not having its back scratched by the others when the need arose.

As long as Speaker Jenninger does not appeal to his fellow-MPs, voicing mild reproof in the media rather than to the House, his warning is not worth one cheer, let alone two.

True, mistakes and mishaps, affairs and scandals occur everywhere, sad to say. But the aim — and pride — of a democracy with a free public and free Press is to publicise and discuss scandals, not brush them under the carpet.

Airing grievances before an astonished public is always accompanied by such a breath of fresh air that the smell of scandal is swiftly dispersed.

This mechanism works well and does us all a power of good. The problem lies elsewhere. The process of purification increasingly seems to take place in the media, with the politicians as the men and women who are to blame showing all the hallmarks of a strangely thick skin and a reluctance to look facts in the face.

They seem steadily less aware of what will no longer hold water with voters (such as the aviation fuel tax exemption for private pilots) and what is simply out of proportion and, in a word, indecent.

Examples are easily listed. Take the self-service mentality of the Christian, Free and Social Democratic Hesse state assemblymen who agreed for once on a disgraceful increase in salaries, benefits and pension rights.

Take the Baden-Württemberg state assembly, which would also like to vote itself more money. Not to mention the full-time Bundestag MP in Bonn earning well over DM10,000 a month.

Take the health service reform proposal to scrap funeral grants for the general public but to increase funeral grants to the next-of-kin of Bundestag MPs to twice the basic monthly salary, or roughly DM17,500.

If there is a trend in the Federal Republic that must be viewed both anxiously and without fear or favour in the years ahead, beyond party-political borderlines and changes of government, then it is the fact that too many politicians have first their own interests in mind and then, just possibly, those of their voters.

Jürgen Offenbach

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 16 July 1988)

■ THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

Loss of appeal among the young plus fears of old songs in a new future

Frankfurter Allgemeine

The SPD is known to many as "old auntie". Some say good old auntie. This is not just because the party is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year.

It is also because the zest and appeal it had for young people during the 60s is gone.

The image once conveyed through a picture of a dreamy and youth-orientated Willy Brandt playing a guitar belongs to the past. What the SPD lacks most of all is young people.

One of the party's more critical members, Wolfgang Michal, reduced this problem in his book to the formula "loyal to the state and free from youth".

The SPD's membership has been decreasing for years. Only 165,000 of the 907,000 members are younger than 35. Once there were a quarter of a million.

This was announced by the party's former national business manager and chairman of the southern Bavarian section of the SPD, Peter Glotz, who has surprisingly decided to try his hand as leading candidate in the next state elections in Bavaria.

Glotz is also chairman of the media and youth policy commission of the SPD executive council.

He made sure that the party congress in Münster will be discussed a "leading motion" on youth.

His plan that the discussion on this subject should last a whole afternoon, however, was not accepted; the whole affair will be more of a brief "talk-show" entitled "New youth — good old SPD".

But Glotz is satisfied, since there are signs of renewed moevement by the young generation in both the SPD's youth organisation, the Jusos, and in the Seeheim Circle, a centre-right party grouping.

Both the young Social Democrats, who come to the Seeheim group with the intention of "resocialising" the young socialists, and the young socialists proper really are young.

The days of the professional 30- to 35-year-old youngsters are gone. The three candidates for the post of national chairman of the young socialists were all about 20 years old.

The election was won by 23-year-old Susi Möbbeck, who joined the party at the age of 14. This might explain why she talks so maturely and professionally about politics, certainly with more maturity than many of her fellow female candidates.

Maybe this is the only way a double dogmastist — a Marxist and a feminist — can talk.

There are also younger MPs in the Seeheim group — you're a youngster here when, as in the case of Florian Gerster, you're in parliament for the first time and only 39 years old.

Gerster says that the young people who come to the Seeheim group are "normal and nice" but "not yuppies", those individualistic juvenile push-and-shove individuals from the big cities.

The new "young Social Democrats" want more practical action and not just solidarity at seminars.

They have already managed to politically "overturn" some of the sub-districts which were previously dominated by the Jusos, such as Wandsbek in Hamburg or whole districts such as Rhine-Hesse.

During a meeting of the Seeheim group in the North Rhine-Westphalian regional office representatives from these two areas reported that people aged between 25 and 30 are again coming along to young socialist meetings.

One of the organisers of the Seeheim group referred to "islands which are getting larger". A very encouraging development for the group.

What are the signs of this new trend? In the Mainz-Bingen area the young Social Democrats even questioned the dogma of the party leaders. They ignored the quota ruling, which guarantee women a certain percentage of the party's executive posts, after the secretary of this area announced that the old SPD party statutes apply.

Ralf Kohl, the new Juso chairman in this district, said: "We want a pragmatic and open policy." They don't want to "abandon themselves to awry ideologies."

Are the Jusos gradually dispensing with their exaggerated ideological commitment?

Will those who want a "Social Democratic youth activities" soon assert their position?

The group has issued its own brochure.

The relationship between the SPD and young people is described as naturally difficult.

This is not only due to the Green parties, the decision by the SPD-FDP coalition in the early Eighties to approve deployment of Nato nuclear missiles or the problems surrounding the Neue Heimat affair, but also to the fact that the Jusos don't offer enough activities such as computer courses, history workshops, campaigns against toxic waste or friendly get-togethers.

Most Juso activities, the brochure complains, consists of endless discussions on political theory and strategic alliance policy.

The group would like to remove the "constriction of a socialist ideological organisation" and replace it by a "more broadly-based Social-Democratic youth organisation."

Youth work must start in schools and technical colleges and seek allies in conservationist groups or in the international youth exchange, in Western Europe and Israel and in trips to Berlin.

This may sound easy, but it would reintroduce more action rather than words to Juso work.

However, even these young Social Democrats have adjusted to the orthography and writing style of the feminists (for example: "That's something the author/authoress never realised").

Even party chairman Jochen Vogel has recently been talking in the masculine and feminine forms, explicitly referring to the party's female and male friends in Munich.

During the celebrations to mark its 125th anniversary the SPD enjoys singing the old workers' and youth movement song *Wann wir schreiten Seit an Seit* (When we march on side by side).

The party is worried, however, that it may be marching towards a new future singing old songs and with an old party.

By way of consolation Peter Glotz pointed out that an analysis of election results showed that the SPD is again popular among the 25 to 35 year-olds and is slightly ahead of the CDU among the 18 to 24 year-olds.

During the Juso congress in Karlsruhe the SPD's national business manager, Anke Fuchs, criticised the complete rejection of everything that is old.

"To be old also means to have tradition," she emphasised. "It would be a bad thing if the old people, who have done their work in our society, are then abandoned."

The image of the "old SPD", however, refers to the "fossilised, immobile and fuddy-duddy" nature of the party, to the fustiness of the Fifties.

In his book Wolfgang Michal claimed that the SPD's party offices spread the charm of old hospitals and finance offices.

Anke Fuchs disagreed, saying that she is familiar with plenty of pleasant SPD offices, where "Social Democratic fervour prevails."

"If the critic of the old auntie SPD mean that we should offer young people a colourful and shimmering pot-pourri of activities to get them involved in politics at all," she stressed, "then he overestimates the tasks and possibilites of a political party and underestimates young people."

Bundestag MP Hermann Scheer (born in 1944) extended this criticism of Michal's criticism in an article for the monthly magazine *Neue Gesellschaft-Frankfurter Hefte*. He polemically asks whether the future should belong to "play-actors".

Nevertheless, Scheer recognises the challenge. The SPD seems "old-fashioned" because it is "not alternative and hedonistic enough".

"In this respect", says Scheer, the book is a symptom of a *Zeitgeist* which the SPD has not yet really accepted.

The "neo-Leftist *Zeitgeist*" in Michal's book, however, is not the "*Zeitgeist* of a New Left, but rathermore of the Neoliberalism or Neocapitalism", which makes it more of a "right-wing" phenomenon.

Scheer himself has nothing against symbols, games, fashion magazines, against "outfit" or magazines such as *Wiener* or other "life-style magazines".

He warns, however, that nothing is more transitional and transitory than life-styles, which are produced by the electronic media, the rapidly changing and fashion-conscious music scene, fashion designers and advertising agencies.

Emphasis should be on political issues and the party's orientation towards solidarity.

Nevertheless, it should approach issues with a "more modern, more imaginative and more creative" style.

Both Michal's book and its rejection the criticism of it by Fuchs and Scheer reveal the relative helplessness of an old party in view of the apolitical young generation.

At the moment there is nothing resembling the old emotions and fighting spirit of the extraparliamentary opposition twenty years ago.

Helmut Herles

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 21 July 1988)

■ ETHNIC-GERMAN MIGRANTS FROM EAST

Authorities caught on the hop as floodgates open



Patience is a virtue. And necessary. Migrants from Poland at camp in Germany. (Photo: Juergen Volkmann)

A family of five ethnic Germans lands in Frankfurt am Main on a flight from Moscow. Their forebears were Germans recruited from Hesse by Catherine the Great to colonise the Volga 220 years ago.

They have spent the past 30 years in Kazakhstan, Stalin having sent the Volga Germans to Siberia in 1941.

The family have now returned to Hesse, the land of their fathers.

They spent years in the exit permit application pipeline. For the past two years the Kremlin has been more generous in approving exit applications by ethnic Germans. But they have been travelling for a good week.

What happens next? Volunteers look after them, meeting their immediate needs. Then the inevitable bureaucratic rat run begins.

They are registered in an refugee camp, referred to the next camp and resettled in temporary accommodation in the place they want to settle, which already has a community of ethnic Germans from Russia.

It all takes time, far too long. But patience is one of their virtues, and just as well too!

The Federal and *Land* governments and local authorities have been bowled over by the latest influx of ethnic German migrants from the East Bloc.

Last year 86,000 of them arrived, twice as many as in 1986. In the first five months of the year they were followed by a further 60,000-plus. This year's total looks like topping 150,000.

Since 1950 ethnic German migrants from East Bloc countries have numbered 1.4 million, but 3.5 million Germans still live in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

We don't know how many of them still want to migrate to the West. The Red Cross has the names of about 200,000 would-be migrants, but the true number is probably very much larger.

Politicians regularly stress that Germans who want to settle in the Federal Republic are entitled — and must be allowed — to do so.

They say so at gatherings of organisations representing ethnic German refugees from Eastern Europe and on visits to Warsaw, Bucharest or Moscow.

Until 1986 the Polish, Rumanian and Soviet governments were accused of violating basic human rights by working to rule, or simply rejecting exit permit applications.

The floodgates have now been opened and the Federal Republic has proved unable to handle the influx. Action has failed to follow the fine words.

Funds are in short supply due to the burden of high unemployment and heavy social security outlay. The DM25m urgently needed to look after migrants and provide them with decent accommodation is not available.

Yet the Bonn coalition has seen fit to exempt abougt 7,000 well-heeled private pilots from aircraft fuel tax totalling — surprise, surprise! — DM25m a year.

Bonn has been well aware of the hardship migrants undergo since the CDU/CSU parliamentary party hearing on 27 April. Chancellor Kohl dealt with the subject in his 19 May discussions with the Prime Ministers of the *Länder*.

Twice, on 11 May and 8 June, the Federal Cabinet has looked into the issue. To what effect? Fine words, if the minutes of the 8 June Cabinet meeting are any guide:

"We forget all too readily that the migrants are Germans who have suffered for longer than all of us from the consequences of the Second World War.

"It ought to be a matter of course for us all to help them to find their bearings in this country and in our society as fast as possible.

"The Federal and *Land* governments and local authorities can do no more than provide a framework. The same goes for the Churches and similar organisations."

The first two paragraphs contain mere truisms. The third is a disclaimer of responsibility. The Federal and *Land* governments and local authorities are not only in a position to provide the framework for integration; they are duty bound to do so.

To be specific, they must make more cash available, they must hire more staff at refugee camps, they must arrange for more language and vocational training courses and build urgently needed homes for migrants and their families.

Bonn coalition politicians must now be taken at the word. But who by? Not by the general public, that's for sure.

With over two million Germans out of work many see them as unwelcome job rivals and, sad to say, treat them as undesirable aliens.

The organisations representing ethnic German post-war refugees from Eastern Europe and the former German Eastern territories ought to be the watchdogs who make sure the migrants get a fair deal.

In certain sectors their volunteers give exemplary service in lending assistance. But leading officials of these organisations prefer to discuss world affairs

RHEINISCHER MERKUR

and Germany in its 1937 borders rather than to stand up and fight for the rights of new arrivals.

The refugees' associations are subsidised by Bonn and reluctant to bite the hand that feeds them. It is less trouble organising the next national conference than to snap at the heels of politicians responsible for the migrants' welfare until such time as they show signs of action and not just fine words.

Article 116 of Basic Law, the 1949 Bonn constitution, guarantees ethnic German migrants from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe German citizenship.

The Federal Administrative Court has, moreover, ruled that in view of the "ongoing pressure of expulsion" today's migrants are entitled to equal status with ethnic Germans expelled from Eastern Europe in 1945 and after.

The Federal Expellees Act specifies that an ethnic German is someone who "has committed himself to his German nationality in his country of origin subject to confirmation by criteria such as ancestry, language, education and cultural background."

As a rule ethnic Germans from Russia, Hungary or Rumania have no difficulty in proving this point. They have been allowed, with brief interruptions, to keep up their German language and traditions.

This cannot be said of migrants from Upper Silesia, where the Polish authorities used the same methods as the Germans in World War II, but in reverse, as it were.

Speaking German was prohibited. For fear of being denounced to the authorities and punished most ethnic German families there didn't even dare to speak German in their own homes after the war.

Many had yet to learn Polish, which wasn't easy. They were forced to adopt Polish surnames. They forfeited their ethnic identity. Which is why younger migrants often no longer speak German.

At the national gathering of Upper Silesians in Essen a few weeks ago more Polish seemed to be spoken than German.

After ratifying the Warsaw Treaty the Polish government agreed, in a note, to grant exit permits to people who were "undisputably ethnic Germans."

But how was this status to be proved after three decades of forcible use of nothing but Polish? Applicants who spoke little or no German were at the mercy of the Polish authorities.

Yet many bona fide Poles can prove they are of German extraction. Poles who live near the German border seldom need to dig deep to unearth German ancestors.

For several years the Polish authorities have been more generous in allowing people to visit the West, but they are most reluctant to issue exit visas for migrants.

Officially Poland no longer has an ethnic German minority. Unofficially their hard work and know-how are admitted to be indispensable, especially in the industrial areas of Upper Silesia.

That is why 80 per cent of ethnic German migrants from Poland arrive with only a tourist visa, and many leave members of their families behind them.

That will inevitably lead to further applications for members of the family to join them in the West in the years to come.

Upper Silesians of German extraction now hold high-ranking administrative, commercial and industrial jobs. They are leading government officials and members of the clergy.

Many a Polish politician, diplomat and clergyman would be entitled to German citizenship if he were not to return from a visit to the West.

The next question is, perhaps, how long migrants from Poland must continue to be classified as ethnic Germans.

There is no need to ask whether they would stay in Poland if they were granted minority rights and allowed to speak German and cultivate German traditions. The answer is almost certainly no.

Poland's economic straits are the main reason why many decide to take advantage of the offer of a fresh start in the Federal Republic.

They can hardly be blamed, and in view of the population decline in the Federal Republic we stand to benefit too.

Nearly four out of 10 migrants are under 25 and a further 37 per cent are aged between 25 and 45.

If the Bonn government abides by its political intentions there seems sure to be an influx of migrants for many years to come, and this is a trend politicians must accordingly take into account.

Structural integration measures have proved their worth, but they are no longer sufficient in quantity.

Migrants' children mustn't be put in ordinary school classes and left to their own devices because they simply don't speak enough German and there isn't enough money to set up special classes with extra German lessons.

They are likely to end up being illiterate in both languages.

German language courses for adults have been extended from 8 to 10 months (which is still not enough), but the Federal Labour Office can no longer afford to meet the demand.

The same is true of special vocational training measures without which migrants of working age are doomed to join the ranks of the unemployed.

Cities and local authorities in conurbations are no longer in a position to house the growing numbers of migrants. That is why they are occasionally treated like undesirable applicants for political asylum.

They are housed unsatisfactorily in halls and containers, as Bavarian Interior Minister August Lang noted in a recent letter to Federal Housing Minister Oscar Schneider.

Herr Lang has called on the Federal government to grant Bavaria an annual DM60m to build homes for migrants.

Bonn used to allocate grants for this purpose but now their numbers are so rapidly increasing it has decided discretion is the better part of valour.

But fine words by the Federal Cabinet are not going to put a roof over the heads of any of the people in question.

Franz Kusch

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 1 July 1988)

■ THE TRADE UNIONS

Membership and influence on the wane

In the early 1970s many books and articles reflected a widespread fear that the Federal Republic of Germany and other industrialised countries were destined to become trade-union dominated.

Employers saw the overwhelming power of well-organised labour as the writing on the wall.

But 15 years later, so much has changed that many wonder whether the trade unions are even in a position to counterbalance the power of management.

There can be no ruling out the possibility of trade union power shrinking to US proportions once the single internal market has united the European Community.

Only about 15 per cent of US workers are union members. Membership has almost halved over the past 30 years despite a bigincrease in the number of jobs.

Structural change in industry and the trend toward a service-oriented society has broken the back of trade union power in the United States.

As in Western Europe, unions concentrated on mass industries such as steel, motors, engineering, mining and clothing.

All are industries that have been hardest-hit by mechanisation and automation. Yet over half the unions' membership is still recruited from them.

The unions have more or less failed to gain a toehold in the service trades that now account for three out of four jobs in the United States.

The decline of US unions has been quickened by their political hiding in the 1984 Presidential election.

The unions wanted to stop the re-election of President Reagan and backed the Democratic, Walter Mondale, financially and organisationally.

This commitment proved a disaster. President Reagan was backed by an estimated 40 per cent of union members.

In Western Europe, British and French unions have lost members by the million. In France four out of five working people are no longer members.

In Britain membership is still over twice as high, with over 45 per cent of labour organised, but the influence of a movement fragmented into 400-odd unions has suffered serious setbacks.

Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte, a trade union monthly published by the DGB, Germany's trade union confederation, comments reproachfully on this: "The third industrial revolution, accompanied by far-reaching structural change in world trade, forms of production and labour organisation and massive neo-conservative attacks and intervention by governments and employers have plunged the trade union movements in France, Italy, Great Britain and the United States into serious difficulties and even brought them to the brink of insignificance.

"This has taken only a few years, but the unions have been equally to blame: politically, programmatically and organisationally."

What, then, about the German trade unions? The official figures convey an impression of health and efficiency. But they are misleading.

There may not yet have been any serious decline in union membership in Germany, but the figures invariably include pensioners.

At least 1.2 million of the 7.7 million people in membership of trade unions affiliated to the DGB have reached retirement age.

Besides, sociologically speaking German unions are still 35 years behind the times on general social trends.

The DGB has now taken to making no secret of this state of affairs. It has no choice but to stop posing as being strong and start recruiting more white-collar members.

To do so it must demonstrate greater intelligence in its rhetoric and greater openness within the unions, convey less of a closed-shop impression and improve its newspapers and magazines in the way the SPD has succeeded in revamping its political weekly, *Vorwärts*.

The average membership structure of the 17 DGB-affiliated industrial unions is said in a recently published survey to roughly correspond to employment patterns in about 1950.

Much ground remains to be made good in recruiting new white-collar and women members, also under-25s.

In Munich, to name a particularly striking example of the trend, 63 per cent of the labour force are salary-earners, yet only 11 per cent of them are members of a trade union.

The DGB partly attributes this trend to allegedly widespread fear of "reprisals" or career disadvantages.

This fear may be widespread in the United States, but in Germany it is largely offset by legal provisions. German workers are amply protected against arbitrary dismissal or other management caprices.

Yet it would be alarming if the balance of power no longer existed in wage rounds. It is up to white-collar and salaried staffs to help redress the balance.

Peter Diehl-Thiele

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 14 July 1988)

Movement forces own official to resign in bid to sell firm

Six years after allegations of bribery and corruption made by the Hamburg newsweekly *Der Spiegel* shook the trade union-owned housing corporation Neue Heimat to its foundations, the scandal continues to take its toll.

The latest "victim" is Christian Democrat and senior trade union official Gustav Fehrenbach, who has been obliged to step down as chairman of the supervisory board of Volksfürsorge, the trade union-owned insurance company.

The growing burden of financial pressure on the trade union movement has, if anything, tended to make the reasons for management reshuffles of this kind even less comprehensible to rank-and-file union members.

On mistaken grounds of solidarity many a controversial union leader has been allowed to keep his job for as long as possible.

At one stage Neue Heimat was even sold for a while to a Berlin property speculator to see if he could get it off the rocks.

Now what is left of the trade union-owned enterprises is on the brink of collapse even successful union leaders with spotless reputations are having to quit.

Gustav Fehrenbach, DGB deputy chairman, has been asked to step down as supervisory board chairman at Volksfürsorge to make the insurance company more attractive for potential buyers.

Fehrenbach may be a Christian Democrat but he is held in high repute throughout the trade union movement. He is liked and respected for his stand against CDU Labour Minister Norbert Blüm on strike legislation amendments, for his personal modesty and for his uncompromising attitude toward the other side of industry, management.

As supervisory board chairman he held a casting vote and decided he would not, come what may, use it against the staff of the company.

That was not to the liking of potential buyers the trade unions urgently need to find for the insurance company, which has a market value of nearly DM3bn.

The aim of the reshuffle is to make the staff accept poorer wage and co-determination terms to make Volksfürsorge a more attractive selling proposition.

"Gustl" Fehrenbach's successor is Social Democrat Hans Matthöfer, board chairman of the trade union holding company BGAG.

Herr Matthöfer, a former SPD treasurer and Finance Minister under Helmut Schmidt, was hired to head the trade union holding company early last year.

His assignment, on behalf of the leading DGB unions IG Metall, ÖTV and IG Bau, was to sell off the hard-hit trade union-owned stake in industry.

Volksfürsorge managing director Werner Schulz was sacked a week earlier. He had been hired to streamline the company and make it more competitive and profitable and easier to sell.

He succeeded, while maintaining special privileges for the staff, and promptly had to go.

No one event, no matter how serious the industrial dispute, has shaken the German trade union movement so badly since the war as the Neue Heimat affair.

What really hurt the unions was not the threat of bankruptcy if the company collapsed entirely; it was the devastating effect the affair had on the confidence in the unions felt by rank-and-file members.

In February 1982 *Der Spiegel* published a cover story claiming that Neue Heimat's Albert Vietor, boss of the largest housing corporation in Europe, was guilty of improper business activities.

One allegation, which hit the unions and public opinion like a bombshell, was that Vietor's property speculation at home and abroad had cost Neue Heimat a fortune.

Another, arguably worse, was that he had indirectly pocketed illicit proceeds. The DGB found itself saddled with the scandal.

Alois Pfeiffer, who was due to take over from Heinz-Oskar Vetter as DGB chairman, stood down in July 1982 accused of property dealing.

Ernst Breit and Gustav Fehrenbach of the Postal Workers' Union bit the bullet and took over as chairman and deputy chairman of the DGB.

A similar fate befell Diether Hoffmann, board chairman of the trade union-owned BfG bank in Frankfurt. He agreed to take over at the helm of Neue Heimat in Hamburg without realising the full extent of the company's disastrous condition.

Walter Hesselbach, who had managed the trade union-owned group of companies superbly for years, retired in March 1985, his reputation virtually

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■ BUSINESS

Nixdorf computers think about savage cuts as profits go into decline

Nixdorf, the computer company, is going through a rough patch: profits are stagnating and shareholders are unhappy; costs are rising; and, for the first time, problems are bobbing up in the marketplace.

There is talk about a freeze on hiring and of drastic cost cutting. Some advertising programmes have been chopped.

If that weren't enough, the smell of scandal is in the air: several executives were dismissed without notice earlier this year for accepting bribes.

Other firms in the industry meticulously keep track of Nixdorf's problems, deriving some pleasure from them.

A firm which has always been praised for its achievements inevitably becomes the centre of attention when it makes even the slightest slip-up.

For over three decades the public has been almost spellbound by the company's remarkable success.

Its founder, Heinz Nixdorf, pieced together his first computer as a student in the early 50s before founding his "Laboratory for Impulse Technology" on 1 July, 1952.

He had virtually no money, but the kind of courage and unshakable optimism which characterises a true entrepeneur.

Nixdorf didn't need a degree to achieve success, even though he lived in a society which rates written qualifications so highly.

He was obsessed by his ideas, and the fact that he died of a heart attack just over two years ago at the Hanover Fair amidst his clients and staff is no coincidence.

Right from the start Nixdorf realised the incredible dynamic potential of data processing: the rapid technological changes, the resultant pressure on firms to think along new lines, and the intensity of competition in this young branch of industry.

This explains why he wanted to develop tailor-made product solutions for his clientele rather than highly impres-

Frankfurter Allgemeine

sive technology. His target market were the countless small and medium-sized firms, which Nixdorf felt would some day be fascinated by the absolutely inexhaustible opportunities provided by computers.

Nixdorf was thus able gradually to become an all-round entrepreneur, who catered for all the data processing problems of his clients.

At Nixdorf the salesmen and not the engineers set the tone. A distribution network was ambitiously set up at home and abroad. Attempts by the company to gain a foothold in banking showed that it didn't want to become totally dependent on small and medium-sized firms.

This strategy made Nixdorf more successful than many of its rivals.

Twenty years ago the company employed 600 people and recorded a turnover of DM50m. Today the turnover figure is over DM5bn and 30,000 employees are on the company's worldwide payroll.

At a time when many firms have been forced to reduce the number of jobs Nixdorf always managed to create new ones — 4,000 in 1987 alone.

Considerable cunning helped solve the financing problems which arose due to the rapid growth in the computer industry.

The Deutsche Bank played a decisive role in persuading Nixdorf to introduce a stock exchange quotation.

Since then Nixdorf has made every effort to improve the firm's reputation for the shareholders, spending a great deal of money on public relations and advertising. So its bad press comes at an inconvenient time.

The company's stock exchange reputation has suffered, and the ambitious plans to obtain cheaper funds there will probably have to be shelved for the time being.

The price of a Nixdorf preference share has fallen from a peak level of DM871 one year ago to DM446.

The company's strong points have suddenly become its weak points. The apparently inexhaustible market potential of the small and medium-sized firms is not so inexhaustible after all.

Rival companies are moving into this market fast. As a general supplier Nixdorf has to supply a lot of things to a lot of people. This means keeping plenty of stocks and increases costs.

Many of Nixdorf's products are no longer marked by the latest technology. The fact that Nixdorf does not produce electronic components itself can be an advantage, but only on a buyer's market. This is currently not the case.

There is a scarcity of chips the world over. Finally, having one's own distribution network becomes less attractive if there is a disproportionately high increase in the costs.

Some of these weaknesses were already criticised in the past. Criticism centred on organisational inadequacies.

The organisational structure simply failed to keep pace with rapid growth.

Heinz Nixdorf is reputed to have said that "administration is superfluous and only costs money".

The low opinion of the company's founder for anything connected with organisation still exists to a certain extent today.

Critics feel there is lack of a clear-cut demarcation of responsibilites. The bribery affair back in February also showed that there is an apparent lack of controlling mechanisms. This embarrassing affair was not the first of its kind.

Nixdorf is going through a difficult phase. To talk about a crisis would be overreacting.

The order books are still full and the company is still making more profit than many other firms in this branch.

Its international standing still seems unaffected, even though a few scratches are discernible.

Which just goes to show that even the best image loses its gloss over time.

Axel Schnorbus

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 19 July 1988)

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unharmed. His successor at the helm of the trade union holding company, Alfons Lappas, was not so lucky. He will go down in history as the man who sold Neue Heimat to a Berlin baker, Horst Schiesser, for DM1.

Neue Heimat's creditors were not prepared to accept this hare-brained scheme. Ernst Breit and Alfons Lappas were forced to buy it back — for DM1 — in November 1986.

By mid-1986 the Neue Heimat affair assumed political proportions when Herr Lappas refused to answer questions put by a parliamentary committee and was imprisoned for contempt.

IG Metall's Franz Steinkühler insisted that Lappas had to go. The DGB appointed Heinz Sippel to wind up the ailing housing corporation. Sippel did a splendid job of revamping the Hessische Landesbank in the early 1980s.

At the beginning of 1987 Hans Matthöfer took over from Alfons Lappas, who had earned an unenviable reputation as a trade union man earning a chief executive's salary of DM60,000 a month.

Thomas Spieker

(Lübecker Nachrichten, 7 July 1988)

Case of MBB, Daimler-Benz highlights trend

Big companies, the saying [illegible] are like clumsy elephants, too slow to respond and to adjust to change.

The scientific community and economic experts praised the slogan "Small is beautiful", claiming that the future belongs to the more flexible smaller firms. They they would come up with new ideas, strategies and products.

But what is happening today? One jumbo merger follows another; company groups gobble each other up, and takeover bids are almost permanently on the agenda.

The prospect of a large European internal market has whetted the appetite of financially powerful groups to piece together mighty conglomerates.

The opening up of the borders and markets is forcing smaller firms into the waiting arms of the business juggernauts.

Those who don't seek protection voluntarily are asked to do so, if necessary by overzealous politicians.

A classic case: the Bonn government is urging Daimler-Benz to take over the Munich-based aerospace company, MBB, after already taking over the firms AEG (electrical goods), MTU (an engine manufacturer) and Dornier (aerospace).

This, the government maintains, would serve the interests of the essential reorganisation of the German aerospace industry.

But in this field there's no real need for this kind of reorganisation.

If Daimler buys its way into MBB Germany's most powerful industrial group in terms of turnover would not only become the dominant German arms producer, but also the country's dominant aircraft construction company.

But what about the maxims of the West German economic system: market forces, competition and equal opportunities? The case is so spectacular because the force behind it is not a capitalistic urge for expansion or lust for power, but a government which otherwise never stops praising the merits of the market economy.

Daimler-Benz does not want to increase its empire at all costs. The incentive to do so is being provided by the Bonn government in the form of government orders worth billions of marks (such as the Eurofighter) and the financial guarantee to take over future losses and the future risks associated with the Airbus.

The principle of competition is being disregarded by its most ardent advocates and a cornerstone of the economic system undermined.

Concentration in the retail trade and longer shop-closing hours or office hours in the services sector are, in comparison, third-rate problems.

The Daimer-Benz/MBB merger threatens to hollow out the entire cartel law. For it looks as if the Bonn Economics Ministry will approve of something which the Federal Cartel Office would undoubtedly have to prohibit.

This could become a precedent for future mergers — with unforseeable implications.

The sheer size of the new group is reason enough for mistrust.

Market power is always a lever for political power.

Which politician could afford to question the existence of a group with over 360,000 employees if it ran into financial trouble? What government would dare refuse loans and subsidies if faced by such a huge partner?

The business decisions of such a giant enterprise would become just as signficant to the general public as political decisions.

The market would be determined by the power of just a few industrial groups. Competition as a balance of economic interests within an economy would no longer exist.

The position of power in the arms and aircraft construction industry is an even more critical aspect in this case.

Both branches primarily rely on government contracts. Politics and business are already closely linked in this field.

If only one supplier exists on the market it can exert much more pressure on its client than firms competing with each other.

The idea that Daimler could even have a say in future on decisions relating to how many tanks and jets the Bundeswehr gets cannot simply be dismissed.

And if an extended Daimler group were to call upon the government to ease the restrictions on arms exports Bonn would find it extremely difficult to refuse.

The result would be a state within a state — at least in one politically highly sensitive area.

The slogan "What's good for General Motors is good for the United States" was developed in America. We cannot afford similar slogans here.

Daimler-Benz cannot be blamed for seriously considering the government's offer.

However, the takeover would not be in the nation's economic and social policy interests.

Klaus-Peter Schmid

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 15 July 1988)

■ MANAGEMENT

A seminar for women trying to find room at the top

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

So that's what women in middle management look like, I thought. They don't wear a classic costume and blouse in subdued colours and they don't go in for court shoes and a matching briefcase.

They were advised to wear comfortable clothes on the course. They weren't in Timmendorf on the Baltic to hold talks for their company.

So there they sat, 15 senior women executives from various companies, all booked for a course on Leadership Training for Women Managers.

Here, one imagined, they would lower their guard. They may look brisk and businesslike, but they too have their problems.

Beate, one of the 15, describes a typical situation that makes her livid with anger — and frustration.

Her boss has made yet another decision that comes within her field of responsibility without as much as notifying her.

She complains bitterly to fellow-executives — all men — but complacent smiles are all the feedback she gets.

"Doesn't she look sweet when she's hopping mad?" one of her peers asks. That stops her in her tracks. She suddenly has no idea where to pick up the thread.

She leaves the boardroom frustrated, as so often. "I simply can't seem to prevail over the dominance of my boss," she says, "and I don't stand an earthly chance when other, male executives are present."

Beate is a 34-year-old personnel manager. This state of affairs drives her to the brink of despair, she tells the course.

"What we want is to strengthen women's personalities so they can take a more determined stand and make more energetic demands in business life," says Gabriele Zimmermann of the School of Management.

But there is more to it than that. "Being a woman (in management) is tough: you have to think like a man, behave like a young girl, look like a lady and work like a horse," according to Roland Rasi of Zürich.

Herr Rasi, managing director of Credit Suisse, made this sarcastic point at this year's German Management Congress in connection with "Cooperation of Men and Women in Management."

This combination is not what women executives want. "I want to be acknowledged on account of my abilities," says Sabine, another of the Timmendorf 15. No more — and no less.

Are men better bosses? Women have so far gained acceptance only in junior and middle management. Senior management is still very much men-only.

Women at the top are most unusual in the Federal Republic. That, says Frau Zimmermann, is why women managers are seldom seen on courses.

"And those that have made the grade no longer need training in how to behave."

The cohorts of 52,000 male managers face a small band of 2,000 women in comparable executive jobs. But women's prospects are improving.

"When the low birth-rate years due to the Pill make their presence felt at the end of the century," says Christa Flohr-Stein of the Careers Promotion Institute, Cologne, "there will be a shortage of executives. The women's hour will then have come."

Many sense that the situation is likely to improve. Courses for prospective women executives run by institutes, organisations, like the School of Management, and local authorities, such as Leverkusen city council, are booming.

Women are prepared to pay for the privilege. A three-day behavioural training course costs between DM350 and DM1,800.

What behaviour is best? How are women to react to sexist comments such as:

"Women can always brew a cup of coffee with such charming smiles."

"Can you not put two and two together, or why do you have to use a calculator?"

"Can you not use a calculator? Is that why you make do with mental arithmetic?"

"She's the pick of the pack," says the boss, tenderly stroking the bottom of his female head of department.

Dorothea Assig of the Women's Career Planning Institute, Berlin, says there are no sure-fire solutions. "Take it with a pinch of humour."

But is a woman to respond to her bottom being pinched by telling her boss he's not so bad himself — and stroking his bald pate? And would she do so if the situation arose?

Men are not alone in making it more difficult for women to make headway in their career. Other women — competitors — eye them keenly. And women's own misgivings are particularly problematic.

Fifteen women are in Timmendorf to gain a clearer idea of their role and to return to their companies with their self-confidence boosted. And here they sit: tense, excited and curious to see what happens.

Ideas

One, a 50-year-old sales manager for a leading German bedding manufacturer, says she isn't really sure what to expect of the three-day seminar.

"Maybe tips and ideas on how to improve the way I handle my role at the firm — and a clearer idea of what I myself want."

She is a tall, attractive woman who creates an impression of being cool, calm and collected — and knowing what she wants from life.

"That's no problem here," she says with a smile, "but when I want to press a point home to a group of board members..."

Learning how to do that is arguably a tall order for a three-day course.

One of the first exercises is the time-honoured ritual of telling the others who one is.

Petra goes courageously to the front of the class and loudly says her name, age, company and the firm's annual turnover. Then she gradually picks up speed, talks faster and more quietly, runs her fingers nervously through her hair — and suddenly sits down again. "Don't fiddle around, don't talk so quietly, don't behave in such a servile manner!" Frau Zimmermann tells her. "There's no earthly reason why you should." But that's easier said than done. Petra's self-assurance has deserted her again. Other women don't fare much better. The three-day courses regularly reveal the same sense of insecurity. Some trainers resort to ridiculous rigmaroles to help executives to become more successful. One management consultant has his executives fight each other with swords, like samurais.



Women are predestined for management, says sociologist Christa Flohr-Stein (standing). (Photo: Juhect)

A Swiss consultant has his trainees run over hot coals. A German computer manufacturer has its executives bale out of a helicopter over Canadian forests.

Christa Flohr-Stein and Dorothea Assig prefer role games, tests and argument techniques.

"I derive tremendous benefit from acting out a situation roughly similar to the conflict I face at work," says Evelyn, 25, who is in charge of a staff of 22 at an advertising agency.

She has problems with delegating responsibilities to both men and women. She often finds herself sitting at a typewriter herself of going to the copier instead of asking a secretary to do it.

One such situation is acted out and then analysed. At the third attempt Evelyn succeeds — and feels heartened. "I ought to be able to behave just as self-assuredly at work now," she says.

"The image women in management jobs convey is crucial for their success, and most still have trouble with it," Frau Assig says.

Above all, women block their own way to the top with their seemingly intuitive striving for harmony at work.

"Women would soonest be on good terms with everyone," says Frau Flohr-Stein, a sociologist. "That makes them unable to handle conflicts and runs strictly counter to what they need in the working world."

The belief that women lack the emotional make-up needed for executive duties has long been disproved.

"Their instinctive feeling of the need for cooperation, for teamwork including the entire staff, their ability to appreciate how others feel, their qualities as good listeners and their diplomacy predestine them for management," Frau Flohr-Stein says.

Fighting spirit, aggression and a hierarchical style of leadership are no longer in demand. A sensitive approach is more in keeping with modern management.

Women, with their mental make-up and educational background, are ideally suited for this approach.

But they must show no sign of being unable to put their point across energetically, although, as Frau Flohr-Stein admits, that is easier said than done:

"Women don't learn to get their own way like boys do, to strive for success and to exercise power, let along to strive for power."

They often hide their light under a bushel instead of making full use of their strong points and stressing their abilities.

"Women," says Frau Assig, "must learn to stand stage-centre if they want to provide leadership."

Even senior women executives are reluctant to admit to themselves that they enjoy having their say and delegating work.

They don't want to provide male-style leadership, they say, not realising that "male behaviour" is just what they lack (and need) to give the lead.

In their scale of importance concepts such as power, success and money, which men invariably list as crucial prerequisites for effective management, do not figure at all.

"I want to make it in my career yet still to stay a woman," says Karin almost defiantly.

Anke says the course has taught her to summon the courage to be more firm and resolute and to work at her behaviour. Will she succeed?

A further point that preoccupies her is only mentioned on the final evening and after hours, as it were. It is how to combine motherhood and a career.

Many of her peers feel this to be a serious problem. As a 35-year-old woman executive puts it:

"I have almost made it to the top, yet now, of all times, I would like to have a baby. After all, I've not much time to lose."

But it was too late in Timmendorf to go into this aspect at greater length — and in greater depth.

Gitta Deutz-Záboji

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 11 July 1988)

■ SHIPPING

New lifeboat designs should improve chances of survival at sea

More than 300 ships a year run into distress somewhere in the seven seas; 2,000 seamen a year die as a result. Some of the blame can be put on a maritime anachronism — antediluvian lifeboats which are little better than they were in the days of sail. Yet better survival systems have been available for years. They are gradually being installed.

A tanker is ablaze. Its crew head through the heat and smoke for the stern and jump down the chute into the free-falling lifeboat.

Everyone knows his position. Everyone takes his upholstered seat and fastens his four-point safety belt.

The man at the control panel notes with relief that all 32 men are on board. The door is closed, and only just in time.

Detonations amidships shake the tanker, which lists ever faster to port. Even the sea is alight on all sides. The sooner they get away, the better. Fists take a firm hold of the trigger mechanism and the boat is catapulted down the chute, shoots like a torpedo 12 metres into the flaming water, dives and resurfaces.

It does so in a flaming inferno, but the boat's 20-kilowatt diesel engine sends the fully-enclosed lifeboat through the waves and clouds of smoke and away from the sinking tanker. Sprinklers douse the keel and superstructure in 1,500 litres of water per minute. The temperature outside is over 1,200° C, as against 38° C, or body temperature, inside.

Ten minutes later the lifeboat and its crew are out of the danger zone, clear of the burning oil slick, and saved!

There was no such luck for the 34-man crew of the Polish tanker *Athenian Venture* when it exploded and sank off Newfoundland on 22 April 1988. All the search parties found was a single, badly burnt corpse.

But the men whose lives were saved in the accident initially described were volunteers, and the "rescue" was simulated on the Elbe, downstream from Hamburg, a few years ago.

The special lifeboat is real enough. The crew of the *Athenian Venture* might have survived if they had had such a fireproof rescue system on board.

That goes not only for oil and chemical tankers and other vessels carrying hazardous cargo. Even the latest freighters carrying "harmless" cargoes are sometimes fitted out with lifeboats that don't deserve the name.

Ships seldom sink in bright sunlight and calm seas. And the ones that sink aren't always the rusty old tin-cans.

A seaman who recalls the sinking of the *Pamir* in September 1957 says, "In that hurricane off the Azores any ship could have sunk." On 12 December 1978 he was proved dreadfully right. The ship that sank without trace was the *München*, 261 metres long, 32 metres wide and over 37,000 grt. The freighter *München* was thus larger than the famous pre-war ocean liners *Cap Arcona* and *Columbus*. She must have sunk in minutes. None of her crew of 28 were ever found. The only traces, found some time later, were four unused covered liferafts and an open lifeboat floating vertically at sea.

The covered rafts have long been compulsory on board ships at sea. They are easy to throw overboard in their tub-shaped containers. They inflate swiftly and automatically. But they are lightweight structures, little more than rubber and tarpaulin, and easily blown out of reach of seamen swimming toward them in a strong wind. In a heavy gale or a hurricane they can be dismissed as a sick joke. "There is nothing worse," says the seamen's division of the DAG, a white-collar workers' union.

For decades," say the Germanischer Lloyd, the licensing authority, "there have been no substantial improvements in the design and construction of lifeboats."

There has been a change for the better since the sinking of the *München*. The employers' liability insurance ran a competition and the Nobiskrug ship-

DEUTSCHES ALLGEMEINES SONNTAGSBLATT

yard in Rendsburg built a new design as part of the "ship of the future" project.

It fulfilled the following specified or recommended requirements:

- it was fireproof, sinkproof and non-capsizing;
- it was directly accessible for the crew;
- it surfaced automatically from any launching angle on board the sinking ship;
- it could be thrown overboard from astern;
- it ensured that crews were provisioned and could be located to the best of the designers' ability.

Experts feel, however, that this combination may have been too much of a good thing! The cylindrical steel craft weighs nearly 13 tons and is extremely expensive.

It was made entirely of steel because of the design specification that it must be absolutely fireproof even without a sprinkler. Steel was also used to ensure that the boat would survive undamaged being launched from a height of 30 metres or more.

It may have been criticised for trying to do too much but that is basically a tribute to German thoroughness. It is designed to survive unscathed fire and smoke, hurricanes and every conceivable mishap. The craft is even launched automatically from several metres underwater, its moorings being released by pressure registered by a manometer.



The only way to abandon ship. (Photo: Ernst Haetecke/Gerhard Taube)

In 1983 and 1984 the first two prototypes were installed on board the new freezer ships *Blumenthal* and *Bremerhaven* as free-falling lifeboats. A further four, slightly less opulent, have since been installed on board other freighters.

Competing designs based on synthetic materials and less expensive then put the Rendsburg yard out of the running.

The competitors, whose much smaller and less heavy (three-to four-ton) free-falling lifeboats have been available for five or six years, are shipyards in Drochtersen on the Elbe and Berne on the Weser.

Their designs are based on self-supporting glass-fibre-reinforced plastic shells. They combine the know-how of the steel craft and the lower cost of GRP series production.

Versions are available to seat between eight and 32. They have passed all manner of tests and been approved by the insurance and the Germanischer Lloyd.

A Lloyd spokesman has this to say about the free-falling lifeboat:

"The safest way to leave a sinking or burning ship is via this system. It is the shape of things to come and has made tremendous headway over the past three years."

Fassmer in Berne built 10 and Hatecke in Drochtersen 100 to various specifications and in various sizes by the end of last year.

Both yards are convinced this design will make the running, especially as Solas, the international convention, has recently been amended to authorise free-falling stern lifeboats.

This option is by no means a matter of course. Some years ago a Hamburg line bought an East Bloc freighter and had to replace its covered lifeboats by conventional ones.

Many a shipowner who was keen to do more than he was legally required to ensure the safety of his crews at sea has foundered on the strict and detailed Solas regulations of old.

Times have changed. Chutes with bright red boats on them are no longer as unusual as they once were, if not yet a matter of course.

And the shipowners' response has been most encouraging. Crews, they feel, are much more motivated on ships with the new lifeboats on board.

Maybe that has taken the wind out of the sails of the old lament: "Who is going to rescue from our lifeboats?"

Gerhard Taube

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 10 July 1988)

■ TELEVISION

Fact and fantasy for children

Children's television is as popular as ever. But fashions change quickly. Children can love a programme today and forget about it tomorrow.

Few television heroes and myths manage to last from one generation to the next. Astrid Lindgren's "Pippi Langstrumpf" and "Ronja Räubertochter" and Walt Disney's cartoons are adaptations from other medi — literature and cinema.

Their popularity on television remains because they can stimulate children's fantasies and dreams.

Television does not have great characters and myths like this.

Gert K. Müntefering, of the German WDR channel, thinks this has been possible because state television has taken a short-sighted attitude towards educational/children's television.

The whole debate on educational television has ended up only worrying parents, teachers and educationalists.

Scientists of popular culture like Neil Postman (*Disappearing Childhood*, *We Are Amusing ourselves to Death*); or Mary Winn (*The Drug in the Living Room*); added to misgivings about television.

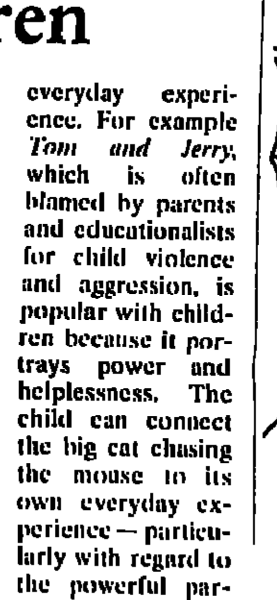
Television quickly became the whipping boy who legitimised the conscience of parents in the daily mixing with children. One could now entrench oneself behind ideologically critical content analysis and putative pedagogical concepts.

This became easier when it became clear children continued looked at other programms as well. Many child stars appear on the screen after 5 in the evening on television advertising.

The main viewing time for 6 to 9 year-olds with audience participation of 23 per cent, is between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. Between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. 30 per cent of the older children are viewers.

Evening time is when most parents sit down to watch the box. Children try to stay up and watch because it's often the only time during the week they have to spend with their parents.

Children live in their own media world, which adults find strange and unintelligible. Children integrate the media into their experience. They use television, cassettes, computers, books, games, comics, newspapers and video. The media gets its importance from this everyday experience. For example *Tom and Jerry*, which is often blamed by parents and educationalists for child violence and aggression, is popular with children because it portrays power and helplessness. The child can connect the big cat chasing the mouse to its own everyday experience — particularly with regard to the powerful parents and teachers. Children identify with the mouse's ability to defend itself. Children wish they could defend themselves against authority. They want just for once to be stronger than adults and to see their reaction.



(Cartoon: Liebermann/Das Parlament)

Children see through adults' fears that such cartoons might have a negative influence. The children say educationalists are anxious because they are afraid of the fly squatter.

A media pedagogue, Jan-Uwe Rogge, advises parents and teachers to talk to children after broadcasts. *Tom and Jerry* cartoons leave children emotionally charged. They need to calm down afterwards.

Rogge runs an educational experiment backed by the Education Ministry in Lower Saxony called "Media Instruction and Family Education." The experiment is about providing a media consultation educational service for parents and the further education of teachers.

Rogge wants "more confidence in dealing with the media." He wants them to have categories and criteria with which they can evaluate the effect of the media (particularly television) on the family life and child development.

Rogge obviously wants to help adults get rid of their fears caused by lack of understanding of the child's relationship with television. All too often fears are voiced about the negative influence of television. Parents and teachers base their fears on a simple equation. The content of bad television has a negative influence on a passive receptive child.

But a child's daily and environmental experiences which he brings with him when he sits down to watch, play a role in determining the effect of media on him.

The experiment can be see as guidance, because on the one hand it takes seriously how children handle the media and their daily experiences, and on the other hand because the behaviour of children with the media is seen as part of family communication.

It is clear from this that there is one thing that television, particularly children's programmes, cannot do. It cannot replace the parents or the school. However television has to copy children's literature and use its resources to stimulate children's imaginations and wishes with a symbolical processing of everyday experiences.

Dr Elke Baur wrote a book 15 years ago about children's television. She has recently written a television documentary on the same theme. "Children's programmes are too simple," she said.

Television producers are obviously afraid to change the format. Media people elsewhere are setting the standards for children's culture. For example Spielberg and Walt Disney are the pace setters in the cinema.

Despite that, children's television has set standards and influenced children's culture. Yet despite Spielberg and Co, it's the competition between state owned and private television which is putting children's programmes, which do not have an important lobby, at risk.

Private television pads out its broadcasts with imported programmes without even thinking about producing their own programmes.

A Dortmund study shows, that in homes with cable television, children like to see children's programmes, but these children tend more than those in homes without cable to switch over to other types of programme, mainly on private channels.

In addition, there are certain interests which have moved into the children's television field simply in the hope of later making money by winning concessions in other fields in commercial television.

The future of children's television as entertainment is in danger. The trend towards programmes for the whole family is tending to overshadow them.

Children's television needs a lobby and events, like the Prix Jeunesse, to bring it to the attention of the public.

High quality programmes which glue kids to their seats and charm away the time, would be a childhood event. It would be an event which parents and teachers could entrust to their tots.

Lothar Mikos

(Das Parlament, Bonn, 1 July 1988)

Fear of satellite programme dumping

STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG

It is possible in the foreseeable future that new satellite techniques will confront us with an avalanche of overseas television programmes which could raze our culture to the ground.

The author? No less than Chancellor Helmut Kohl. He was writing on the occasion of the European film and television year 1988.

Whose culture will be razed to the ground? What can one do about it? These were the sort of questions posed at a Friedrich Ebert Foundation conference on "Television between Americanisation and Europeanisation" in Saarbrücken.

Trier university media expert Winand Gellner said nearly all West European television media are being Americanised.

Economic structures would come into being which were comparable to the American media industry and which would make it possible for American concerns to buy up large amounts of television.

Peter Ludes of Siegen university said that British and American television had influenced West German television. Americanisation was taking place through the purchasing of American programmes; through the importation of forms of television like the talkshow; and in the way broadcasts were made — the speed with which a broadcast is cut and edited.

Many Europeans have been expecting a Europeanisation of television. But Richard Dill, foreign coordinatior of ARD television, gave a description of his experiences with a channel called Europa-TV which served as a warning to others to keep feet firmly planted on the ground.

Other contributions gave the conference a pragmatic perspective. Their forthright philosophy of viewer ratings and competitiveness, provoked the opposition of every participant who called for the preservation of television culture.

The right is reserved for Reinhard Klimmt, chairman of the SPD's media commission, to show the defensive nature of the position of the advocates of television culture controlled by public law.

After what Jochen Zimmer of Trier university said about the existing European television, we can expect the types of specialised channels with multinational cooperation to succeed.

The structural changes in the American television industry as well as Winand Gellner's comments on the "Programme market of the future," show that increasing demand for televison programmes may lead to more European economic dependency on the American industry.

Economic factors support this economic prognosis. For example, the Americans have cheap products which are dead in their market which they dump on Europe.

Bernd Zimmermann

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 16 July 1988)

■ ENTERTAINMENT

Michael Jackson: lots of froth but no Bubbles

Helping to put some pep into Pepsi.

Michael Jackson gave only two encores in Hamburg. But the noise at the Olympic Stadium went on and on.

It was the sort of row locals normally hear only when the Hamburg SV soccer team scores a goal. It continued long after the second encore.

Thousands of youngsters held up cigarette lighters. It didn't worry them that the heat might blister their hands.

"I just know he's coming back on stage," said 15-year-old Andrea as she punched at a huge inflatable Pepsi-Cola can bouncing around inside the stadium.

Fifteen-year-old Andrea says that she adores Jackson because everything about him is so "way-out" and because he likes animals.

This explains why she feels it's a good thing that Jackson didn't take his pet monkey *Bubbles* on tour; it probably wouldn't have been able to take the strain.

Suddenly there's a flicker on the two giant video screens in the stadium — the start of a third encore? The fans start howling, but all they get to see is a video plug for Jackson's LP *Bad:* "Michael Jackson on CBS Records."



Michael Jackson display dummies went on sale in the shops.

The disappointment soon disappears; after all, there are still plenty of Michael Jackson T-shirts, sweatbands, caps and badges on sale in the stadium, not to mention the CBS records in the shops.

This record company's marketing director proudly announces that the sales of Jackson's latest LP have increased since the start of the superstar's concert tour in Germany from about 10,000 to at least 30,000 a week.

"The first million have already been sold; the tour has really pushed up the album's sales," says the CBS manager in the incomparable language of the marketing strategists.

Although sales figures of this kind are nothing special in the music industry Michael Jackson is a particularly good example of how to market pop music as a product.

The Jackson management has made clever use of almost every available marketing channel.

The way in which the tour has been organised proves that despite his thing about monkeys, his facial surgery and his obsessed adoration of Liz Taylor, Michael Jackson is also a smart businessman.

Like no other pop star before him he has realised how to go on making even more money. His formula for success: concert tours as an advertising campaign for firms willing to pay the price.

As a singer whose message for his fans is to dance and have a good time Jackson understandably had no trouble working a few Pepsi-Cola slogans into his songs.

For the "commercial version" of his hit single *Bad* the 29-year-old eccentric simply added a new message: "You're a brand-new generation, and Pepsi's coming through."

Jackson's "price" for sponsorship by Pepsi was over $10m. The Pepsi PR experts hope that the association of the product with Jackson will give a particular boost to the Cola-drinking youth.

The deal involved the production of six TV spots, in which Jackson — as marketing manager, Matthias Schroeter put it — "virtually formed a symbiosis with Pepsi."

"Two-digit growth rates" have already been recorded for Pepsi in the Federal Republic of Germany, a market which has an annual turnover figure of DM600m. In the symbiosis with Jackson, Schroeter explains, Pepsi has a "young, modern and dynamic" image.

In the concert arenas the "new generation" jostle its way to the Pepsi stands to take part in the "Pepsi test", in which a comparison is made between two thimblefuls of different types of Cola.

On the way towards the stage concert fans also come across the Pepsi zeppelin, the colossal Pepsi bottle and various huge cans as well as the advertising around the arena.

And if, as during the concert in Hamburg, it starts pouring down with rain the audience may get annoyed but not the sponsors. The people working for the cigarette brand *West* took advantage of the bad weather to distribute thousands of their umbrellas with the white-turquoise emblem of the firm free of charge.

By the time Jackson has finished his tour of Germany almost half a million people will have seen one of his concerts — for a ticket price of about DM50.

One thing is certain: next time they walk through a supermarket they'll definitely notice the Cola rack (up to now Pepsi had a roughly 11 per cent share of the market as opposed to Coca-Cola's seventy per cent share).

At the same time Jackson's concerts will also step up sales of his new album.

The concert in Munich Olympia stadium (roughly 72,000 fans) will have a probable intake of DM3m. Even after deducting all the costs — over 600 people are involved in organising the concert and setting up the huge stage — roughly DM1m still remains for the Jackson crew and a few hundred thousands D-marks for the promoter "Mama Concerts".

The agency's press spokesman Jean-Baptiste Doerr puts the annual turnover figure of "Mama Concerts", which organises over 200 concerts a year, at "approximately DM30m."

According to its owner Marcel Avram the figure is "somewhere near DM50m", although it is not clear whether "there's a few million in net profit every year."

In all probability a few million more or less doesn't really matter in the music business, since everything in this business at the moment seems to turn to gold — especially if it is connected in any way with Michael Jackson.

The British firm "M & M-Merchandise", for example, whose stands in the concert arenas sell sweatshirts for DM70 or sweatbands with a Michael Jackson signature for DM10, paid DM4m in licensing costs to the Michael Jackson management to ensure the worldwide rights to sell these items.

Or publisher Klaus Eck from the Goldmann publishers in Munich, for example, who claims to have paid a "six-digit figure (in D-marks)" for the Jackson biography *Moonwalk* and sold 250,000 copies within just one month.



A word of encouragement for Herr Tschäksn. (Photos: dpa)

Not forgetting the Frankfurt-based video firm *Rainbow*, which soon issued the video cassette *Legend Michael Jackson* (DM39.80), which is currently selling like hot cakes, probably because the firm has organised joint "promotions" with Pepsi-Cola.

"Michaelmania" has also hit Hamburg's noble "Galleria" shopping arcade, where the Hanseatic yuppies buy their expensive clothes. "Michael Jackson bed linen", a Michael Jackson display dummy in rocker's clothing, and Michael Jackson chalk drawings on Hamburg's pavements are just some of the novelties in this field.

Even local politicians, with an eye to obtaining the votes of the young voters, have tried to jump on the bandwaggon. A spokesman for "Mama Concerts" said that Munich's mayor Georg Kronawitter rang up personally to ask whether "Herr Tschäksn" would sign the city's visitors' book when he comes to Munich.

The Federal Railways put on seven special trains for the "Rock and Rail Happening of the Year" to take fans along to Jackson's concerts in Germany.

Young, dynamic and good for sales — it seems to work for everybody. The personality cult with which Jackson surrounds himself is good for Jackson and for his sponsors.

Numerous newspapers and magazines, ranging from the weekly *Spiegel* magazine to the daily *Abendblatt*, publish series on the "mystery" of Michael Jackson, the "phenomenon", the "lonely star".

"Mama Concerts" has collected over 12,000 press clippings on Jackson since the beginning of the year.

The magazine *Tempo* paid about DM130,000 for the preprint of the *Moonwalk* biography, a move which made it very unpopular with its regular readers (one reader wrote that the biography is so boring that Michael Jackson must have written it himself).

Despite spectacular facial surgery and despite claims of passionate love affairs with Liz Taylor or Liza Minnelli, the biography does not present anything which could rated as really sensational ("I never thought that I would become a trendsetter with my white socks.")

The best guarantee for good sales is always plenty of rumours, and there are certainly enough of those around in Jackson's case.

A special supplement entitled *Michael aktuell* claimed that his house is full of display dummies, and the *Bild am Sonntag* maintained that Michael is "sad because his snake died."

Maybe that's why he only gave two encores in Hamburg.

Arno Makowsky

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 7 July 1988)

■ THE ENVIRONMENT

Disfigured faces of the 12 Apostles of Bamberg tell a tale of pollution

Acid rain has disfigured the faces and maimed the figures of the Twelve Apostles in the main entrance to Bamberg Cathedral.

The combination of raindrops and static emission has worn away their hands and feet, reduced their faces to a grimace and ploughed deep furrows in the sandstone folds of their clothes.

For over 760 years they have stood on the shoulders of the prophets, symbolising the New Testament based on prophecies made in the Old.

They were hewn in sandstone by unknown master-sculptors in about 1225 and have since stood guard at the portal. No-one has since touched them with the slightest intention of doing them damage.

They have survived the Reformation, the peasants' uprisings, the iconoclasts and the Thirty Years' War.

They have survived absolutism and the wars before and since the emergence of nation-states. They even survived World War II air raids.

But since man began to use coal and oil for heating and to travel by means of the combustion engine the Apostles have wept acid tears whenever rain has fallen.

Inside the cathedral, on the southern chancel pillars, statues of Ecclesia and Synagogue symbolise the triumph of Christianity and the decline and fall of Judaism.

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Ecclesia is a woman wearing a crown, clearly a victorious figure. Synagogue is a ravishing beauty with worldly charms and a playful smile on her sensual lips.

They both once stood by the outside wall of the cathedral, alongside the apostles and the prophets at the main entrance. What might they look like now if they had been left standing outside?

Gerhard Lorenz, the master-builder of Ulm Minster, has some idea of what the answer might be. Seventy years ago his grandfather restored the main tower and replaced ruined masonry.

The stones he replaced were a handful of solid blocks of stone. Now, 70 years later, the masonry his grandfather left untouched is ruined.

Between 60 and 70 metres from the ground, where the fog can be particularly dense in Ulm, the sight that confronted Gerhard Lorenz when he set about repairing damage to the tower was appalling.

"It was like a quarry," he recalls, and even the layman can see that the grey Krenzheim limestone has now almost totally replaced the 500-year-old yellow Donzdorf sandstone.

Anything that is left outdoors is doomed to decay, weathered by time and atmospheric pollution.

Today's polluted air is making short shrift of masonry that has withstood centuries. The second white paper on architectural damage published by the Bonn government last spring says damage since the turn of the century has been as fast and serious as in the previous 400 years.

Damage to buildings is reported to have increased by leaps and bounds. It seems reasonable to assume that this corrosion has begun to eat into present-day building materials.

Concrete buildings are certainly showing serious signs of heavy wear and tear. They include, for instance, the Munich Olympic Village, built a mere 16 years ago.

Many Germans will remember the collapse of the Kongresshalle in Berlin, a concrete-roofed building dubbed the Pregnant Oyster. Its roof fell in and it had to be demolished.

But that is only the final stage. Decay begins with smaller-scale damage that often goes unnoticed: rifts and cracks, progressively poorer insulation, condensation on the ceiling, mould in the corners, stripes of chalk and rust.

Is acid rain to blame for all these telltale signs? Must we now talk in terms of the decline and fall of high-rise building?

To arrive at an answer to these questions we must first stop to consider the material invented by Joseph Monier, a 19th-century Paris gardener whose cement flower pots had burst under pressure.

He added a rib-cage of wire to the liquid cement, the problem of bursting flower pots was solved and M. Monier died a rich man. His reinforced concrete was used all over the world — and still is.

Houses with concrete floors, roads, bridges, railway tunnels, public buildings, soccer stadiums, hospitals, air-raid shelters, nuclear power stations — all relay on reinforced concrete.

Confidence in its durability and load capacity is generally reflected in the epithet "permanent." Yet many concrete structures built 30, 20 or even 10 years ago are badly in need of repair.

Burdens

"Changing environmental conditions impose a burden on the outer surface of buildings," says a guideline to German industrial standard DIN 1045, which deals with reinforced concrete.

The guideline goes on to add that reinforced concrete will resist external wear and tear for decades, even without chemical aids, provided "they have been correctly planned and built." That is an important proviso.

Acid rain of which sulphur is the main mischief-maker does little damage to concrete. Concrete is highly alkaline, so it can easily offset the droplets of acid rain.

Carbon dioxide is another matter. CO_2 is not naturally harmful, forming part of the air we breathe. It is only when the air is saturated with carbon dioxide, a constant by-product of combustion, that problems arise.

Carbon dioxide has a destructive effect on concrete. Experts call impregnation with CO_2 carbonation.

Carbon dioxide, combined with damp, converts the alkalinity of concrete from pH 12 to pH 7, the rating considered neutral, or midway between acidity and alkalinity.

The critical rating for concrete is pH 9.5, the point at which the iron in the concrete starts to rust.

The crucial durability factor is how much cover there is over the iron. If it is insufficient the iron soon starts to rust.

Rust is accompanied by an enlargement in volume. Rifts occur in the concrete. Water seeps into it and acid rain continues the work of destruction.

Telltale stripes of rust first appear, then the concrete starts to crumble. Larger chunks follow, uncovering the iron.

So the process is not, initially, the result of pollution but of shoddy workmanship and poor planning or execution.

Construction work always costs money, and corners have often been cut by builders who use an admixture of sand instead of cement.

Shoddy work

This damage is now coming into its own. It has grown increasingly evident over the past 10 years because shoddy workmanship has been accompanied by environmental stress in the form of acid rain and salt spread on winter roads.

"Most of our buildings are growing long in the tooth," says Professor Rupert Springenschmidt of Munich University of Technology.

But can this be the explanation of signs of age after a mere 20 or 30 years? A church welfare centre for the handicapped in Coburg, Bavaria, had to invest DM2m on repairs to buildings only 11 years old.

The Olympic Village in Munich was completed 16 years ago yet already, according to Raimund Probst, a leading consultant, it is a "bottomless pit" where repairs to concrete structures in Munich is concerned.

The Märkisches Viertel housing estate in Berlin is a mere 20 years old. It was designed and built in strict accordance with the idea of buildings as "machines for living." It has long been under constant repair.

Concrete as such, says Munich engineer Heinz Schnaubelt, is not particularly prone to damage. He works as a consultant all over Germany.

Risks arise only when the human factor, including economic constraints, is involved. Who, as a public works contractor, is keen to take up cudgels with the Public Audit Office and explain at length why a sounder but more expensive technique was used?

Experts disagree vehemently on whether rifts in prestressed concrete bridges are due to faulty planning or inevitable. They are bound to do so, with court cases pending.

A few years ago a news item went the rounds that 8,000 bridges all over Germany were in danger of collapse. A majority of experts now dismiss this claim as nonsense.

New buildings that collapse and fall apart are still restricted to Hollywood film sets, but a number of bridges have indeed been demolished not because they had grown too narrow but because the iron in their pylons had grown rusty.

The third white paper on static and vehicle emission protection notes that

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■ MEDICINE

The death ray that cures: enormous range of uses for the laser beam

Doctors at a Minnesota hospital have reported using laser rays to "shoot open" a 38-year-old woman patient's blocked aorta.

In an hour they had the patient's blood on the move again, sending a balloon after the laser probe and through the aorta to widen the aperture and clear the deposits on the inside wall of the blood vessel.

A team of Düsseldorf University Hospital doctors led by Professor Eckehard Strauer had just pioneered this surgical breakthrough on two women patients with severely obstructed hypogastric arteries.

The laser catheter completed its work in half an hour and the patients, who had previously been in serious pain, were spared surgery that would have taken several hours.

These two "firsts" spotlight a medical device from the high-tech toolkit that is being put to growing and varied use.

Lasers are as well-established in eye and slipped-disc surgery as they are in treating hydrocephaly and cancer. There are no signs yet of limits to their use.

Surgical steel, radiation and chemical bombardment, the Big Three, have definitely been joined by a fourth major category of treatment: light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation, or laser for short.

The laser's medical success story is due to its surprising versatility. A laser beam can sever tissue like a scalpel or join it like a soldering iron.

It clears blocked blood vessels like an oxygen lancet. It smashes kidney and gall stones like a jackhammer and flattens proud flesh and warts like a bulldozer.

US physicist Theodore Maiman cannot have foreseen this triumphant progress when he invented the laser in 1960. His initial problem was that no-one knew what to do with it.

Even specialist journals refused to publish articles about his invention. Yet the new technology soon made headway in medicine, with an initial breakthrough in eye surgery.

Conventional methods usually failed to reattach a detached cornea. It took the laser beam, which passed through the optical system of the human eye and concentrated its energy on the retina, to do the trick.

Lasers were first used in eye surgery in 1961. Dermatologists followed suit two years later.

The laser is now used in about 10 branches of surgery, due largely to the development of optical glass via which the laser beam can be sent round corners and past obstacles.

The catheter used by the Düsseldorf surgeons has an inside diameter of 1.5mm. It incorporates a guide wire and a quartz fibre a mere 0.6mm in diameter.

In combination with an endoscope, used to keep an "eye" on the operation, lasers are now beamed at the furthest corners of the human body.

The use to which they are put depends mainly on their wavelength, which is is determined by the laser medium, or substance stimulated to emit radiation.

Neodym-YAG, argon, dyestuff and carbon dioxide lasers are the categories

Frankfurter Rundschau

mainly put to medical use, carbon dioxide lasers being considered the "workhorse" of the team.

They beam infra-red light, invisible to the naked eye, that releases its total energy on reaching the surface of its target.

They thus have no in-depth effect whatever, making them an extremely useful cutting tool for surgeons.

Neodym-YAG lasers also beam infra-red light but differently. Their radiation is widely spread in body tissue and penetrates up to six millimetres into the body while hardly affecting the surface.

Depending on the duration of exposure, this laser category can be used to cauterise, evaporate or carbonise tissue. It can also be used to rejoin severed blood vessels.

Infra-red lasers thus serve as a kind of optical scalpel used in largely bloodless surgery.

The infra-red ray is accompanied by a pilot beam of visible light so the doctor can see where the laser is heading. Its path is identical to that of the working laser.

The argon laser, with its green light, is used to operate on detached retinas and to remove warts and proud flesh from the skin.

The effect laser beams have on the body are based on three factors: light, heat and high energy, of which the last-named triggers what can only be termed mini-explosions.

If the heat generated by a laser beam exceeds 60° C the tissue coagulates, body protein is denatured and the tissue eventually disintegrated.

The precise effect again depends on the specifications of the laser used, wavelength and energy being the crucial factors.

They determine how deep the beam penetrates into the tissue and what effect it has there.

There is also a difference between a continuous beam and a flicker. Work is under way on using these parameters to the best effect. They are of crucial importance for the laser's medical future.

This shape of things to come is under investigation and development at laser medicine centres in Lübeck, Ulm and Berlin. "We aim to make full use of the laser's bandwidth for medical uses. Our task is to ascertain the necessary process parameters," says physicist Professor Gerhard Müller.

He and medic Dr Peter Berlien are in charge of the Berlin Laser Medicine Centre, a non-profit limited company engaged in practical development work at the city's Free University.

Laser uses in cardiac and circulatory medicine are the spearhead of developments. Reopening blood vessels blocked, say, after a heart attack is the objective.

Photoablation, a kind of optical cauterisation used to remove chalk deposits on the inside walls of blood vessels, has proved most satisfactory with a Neodym-YAG laser.

Light is beamed at the affected area at nanosecond intervals, smashing the chalk and leaving harmless molecular fragments.

Berlin experts feel the ideal surgical tool for photoablation will, however, be the excimer laser, which is still at the development stage.

Many problems remain to be solved before it can be used in practice. "We had to use a coolant because the blood colouring absorbs light and heats the blood," Professor Müller says, mentioning one such problem. "We found a saline solution served the purpose well."

The absorption of light by haemoglobin, the blood colouring, may be a handicap in "trouble-shooting" blocked arteries, but it makes another use possible.

It can be harnessed to make laser heat blood vessels from within, coagulating the vessel wall and cauterising, say, varicose veins from inside.

Beamed at from outside, angiomas and port-wine marks on the skin, both of which are due to vesicular malformations, can be eliminated.

Angiomas affect infants and can not just deface them; when located near internal organs such as the respiratory tract they can be potentially lethal.

When the affected blood vessel is cauterised the tissue is starved of blood and dies. As the beam must penetrate the skin to reach deeper tissue strata a coolant is needed.

In this case ice cubes are used. Infra-red light from a Neodym-YAG laser passes through the ice but the skin is kept cool.

Lasers have earned their first merit marks in treating tumours of the bladder, the kidney, the stomach, the intestines and the respiratory tracts.

All present serious problems and are accessible by endoscope. The tumour tissue is either coagulated or evaporated. Open surgery, which can be such a burden, is unnecessary.

Laser target areas are transformed to a depth of several millimetres into ruined tissue, the remains of which are rinsed out for laboratory analysis.

With luck the patient will have only a small scar to remind him of the dangerous tumour a year after laser treatment.

Laser specialists harness the beam's high-energy effect to shatter kidney, gall and bladder stones.

The highest energy level is used to make this "optical breakthrough," which is brought about when the laser beam generates a plasma of ionised molecules in the tissue.

The result is a miniature explosion, with lasers beamed at intervals to trigger a series of controlled mini-detonations.

The stones are shattered and disintegrate into molecular fragments as though they had been smashed by a jackhammer.

Other uses of the versatile laser are to be found in all branches of clinical medicine. In gynaecology, for instance, abdominal adhesions can be successfully treated by carbon dioxide lasers.

Irregularities of the womb are coagulated by Neodym-YAG lasers, which are also used to reopen blocked Fallopian tubes.

Fig warts in the genitals are evaporated using lasers under a microscope without damaging the skin underneath them.

Urologists use YAG lasers beamed at intervals to treat urethral strictures in addition to laser treatment of bladder and kidney tumours.

Neurologists can use lasers to coagulate brain tumours, while blocked drainage channels are cleared by lasers to treat hydrocephaly.

Even functional brain surgery can now be carried out using super-thin optical fibre to cauterise parts of the brain where, say, Parkinson's disease originates.

Orthopaedic surgeons aim to use lasers to treat damaged inter-vertebral discs. They have reported successful laser surgery on laboratory animals.

Dermatologists have used lasers to treat warts and port-wine stains and to remove tattoos.

Professor Müller feels removing tattoos can be a most important factor for resocialising certain categories of young people and helping them to find work..

New laser uses developed by eye surgeons include the elimination of lenticular nuclei in cases of cataract.

As the sac remains intact it may be refilled using a transparent gel which is still at the development stage, making it unnecessary to implant a rigid lens.

This list could be continued, but laser applications are not merely of methodical importance; they also help to cut health service costs.

Surgery seldom needs repeating. Patients spend less time in hospital. They convalesce faster and can get back to work sooner. These are major advantages of laser treatment. Professor Müller mentions yet another:

"Medical lasers counteract the impression of the laser being a death ray. In reality light is a source of health and the laser is a curative beam."

Wolfgang Silvanus

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 16 July 1988)

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sulphuric air exhausting the alkaline reserves of concrete is largely to blame for rusting steel in reinforced concrete structures.

In Frankfurt, for instance, all the bridges across the River Main are in need of repair. These essential repairs will cost DM40m.

There can be no doubt that harmful atmospheric substances, jointly with damp, are to blame for premature ageing of buildings.

The Federal government says environmental damage to buildings amounts to an estimated DM4bn a year, adding that this is only a rough estimate and the lower limit of the likely expense.

More detailed findings are not yet available, and that alone is an indication of how helpless we are in the face of atmospheric pollution and its repercussions.

Lutz Wicke, scientific director at the Environmental Protection Agency in Berlin, has written a book about "The Ecological Billions" environmental pollution is costing us.

Adding up figures in this way may seem dubious inasmuch as some damage cannot be quantified in cost terms, but Wicke's figures are nonetheless impressive.

He arrives at an annual total of DM48bn in damage to nature, health and buildings due to atmospheric pollution. That is twice as much as is currently invested in environmental protection.

He goes one step further and claims that strict enforcement of static emission regulations, compulsory catalytic converters for all new cars and pollution control of old installations would cost DM80bn by the turn of the century.

Yet it would prevent damage totalling DM250bn, he says.

Matthias Fink

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 16 July 1988)

■ HORIZONS

Female passion v. male obduracy: an Oberammergau play

The women of Oberammergau are involved in an unholy row over what is meant to be a holy festival: the Passion Play. There have always been quarrels and disputes about something or other at Oberammergau, but this one has a new flavour. Hannes Burger reports on the passion behind the Passion Play for the Hamburg weekly, the *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt.*

There were women there, of course, when the Black Plague reached its height in Oberammergau in 1633 and the people vowed that a passion play would be put on every 10 years — with the result that the Lord is said to have delivered them from the Plague.

And for the next 200 years or so, women indeed did play their full part in the Oberammergau Passion Play.

But, about 120 years ago things changed. The involvement of women was reduced to the unmarried under the age of 35.

Today, Oberammergau's women are challenging to regain an equal place. But they are not having much success against male defence which is both difficult to rationalise and stubborn.

More than 350 years after the vow, the Black Plague has certainly disappeared, but the plagues of jealousy and obstinacy have remained.

Earlier grounds for disputes such as what sort of schmalzy text should be used and what kitschy scenes should illustrate Nazareth (not to mention issues like anti-Semitism) have disappeared. The outside world just could not care any more.

But a battery of angry women pitting their wits against the resistence of stubborn and blinkered men gives a new dimension to Oberammergau's strife.

Although the CSU mayor has put forward a motion to give women equal rights, and although the Catholic priests support the women's case, the local CSU councillors, the majority, reject it.

The women have two aims. They want to become involved without any limits being put on how far their involvement may go; and they want a part in the decision making.

The second is significant, because before each Passion Play, a committee is set up. If discrimination were to be eliminated, the women would then be free to, through the committee, also have a say in who plays what role — an important decision — and other important decisions. Who plays Mary and other important female roles is decided by men.

If you ask in Oberammergau, no one seems to know any more exactly why the involvement of women was restricted last century (apart from in the choir).

Some say that men simply wanted to spend longer at auditions with unmarried women under the age of 35, safe in the knowledge that their own wives were sitting quietly at home.

One of the campaigners at the head of the battle said: "They simply want young girls around them, not old women."

But there are other theories. These are connected with the rising popularity of the Passion Play in the 19th century and the associated rise of tourism. There were not many big hotels and, as a result, all available space was used for accommodation — almost every spare bedroom was in use.

This meant that the housewife was needed to look after the guests and earn money — while the husband acted.

Today, there is scarcely a private room let in Oberammergau during the Passion Play, but the restrictions on women still apply. The anti-change lobby — which means the male team in the local council and figures behind the scenes such as a silent string puller called Gerhard Ostler, who is the head of administration — assemble a bundle of arguments why the involvement of women should not be increased.

Each argument is as threadbare as the next: extra wardrobes would be needed if biblical scenes of Jerusalem were acted by as many women as men; and an extra women's lavatory would have to be built — and that would be expensive; and then any change would be a break with tradition (which tradition? The last 120 years or the 230 years before that?).

Three Oberammergau women took the battle further by getting up a petition and appealing to a civil court in Munich.

But the court ruled that the Passion Play should not be regarded under public law as an organisation which should be required to pay heed to equal treatment of both men and women.

It rejected the application and withdrew from the case, even though the Oberammergau Passion Play organisation is not a private club but a public one.

And that is quite apart from the fact that the occasion could hardly be more appropriate for equal treatment of men and women such as this, with its religious theme.

But the women are not giving up. They can reckon on public support from outside Oberammergau. Although, it must be said that experience has shown that the more the support from outside the village the women get, that the more obdurate the Oberammergau men are likely to become.

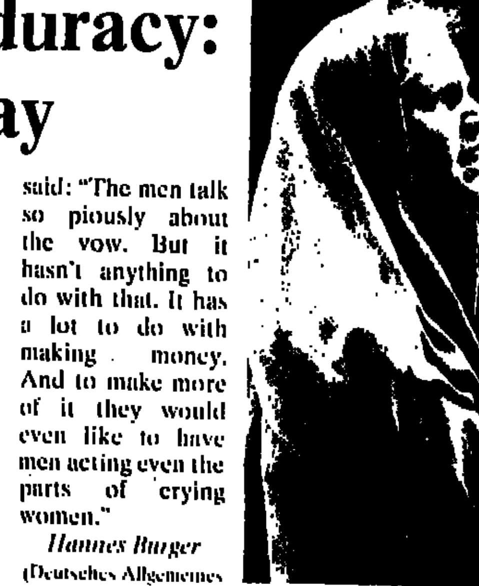
The women think that professional jealousy is a reason. About 300 women would be interested in acting if they had a chance, but there is no room for more than about 1,000 to take part. They are all in groups which take turns.

Equality would mean many men being replaced by women and, say the women, giving up the gratuities they are paid.

The three spokeswomen for the women said: "The men talk so piously about the vow. But it hasn't anything to do with that. It has a lot to do with making money. And to make more of it they would even like to have men acting even the parts of crying women."

Hannes Burger

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 17 July 1988)



But don't you see? There's room for both of us!

(Photo: Sven Simon)

Garden designed to help blind develop a feel for flowers

When the *Bundesgartenschau* (federal garden show) ended last October in Düsseldorf's Südpark, two things happened: a route designed for blind people was kept; and the job of rescaping the grounds was given to mentally and physically handicapped people.

There was initially a lot of opposition to the second because some city officials thought it would be too much to expect. But they were proved wrong and the scheme had been successful.

The garden show was set amid about 30 kilometres of criss-crossing paths. Integrated into this was a two-kilometre network through and around 16 separated gardens laid out for blind people.

The show is over but the park is open to the public and the route for the blind has been improved.

Renate Koch is a 25-year-old who is on the committee of the local association for the blind. She has been blind from birth.

She demonstrated the route around the gardens using a Walkman and an information box which has been developed by a group in Marburg called "tactile media". The box contains relief maps of each of the separate gardens plus Braille explanations. A commentary is played over the Walkman.

Frau Koch's first port of call was the summer flower garden. That is marked by something that to the sighted visitor is merely decoration but to a blind person is a signpost — a paved square about a square metre set into the ground.

This indicates that two paces to the right there is an information board with Braille script and diagrammatic information in relief.

This enables Frau Kock to find out what is flowering and where; and gives her an idea of the layout, where the paths are and where they lead to.

She walks with the aid of a stick, which she uses to stay close to the edge of the path. Occasionally a flower with a long stem brushes her hand. She feels the plant and immediately recognises what it is. Sometimes she has to squat to reach a plant.

There is a system of bulbous metal caps on the ground to signal diversions where the path curves, or where there is a blind alley or some other irregularity. Plates set in the ground guide her to various subsidiary paths and crossings.

Frau Koch tested the information box at home before she used it in Südpark, but she sometimes still becomes disoriented; sometimes in places where the dirt has covered the raised periphery marker; making it difficult to discern, she makes a false step.

The system does have a few problems. Frau Koch said afterwards. "Sixty per cent positive, 40 per cent negative."

She had problems finding the connecting way between two of the gardens. She found the paved signal stone but was unable to find the information table.

She described the course as a strain. She said that going alone meant a lot of concentration to get the feel of the circuit and avoid impediments. "Often, people stand in the way and I can feel the looks of curiousity.

"However, I agree entirely with the idea of a fully integrated circuit, although some in our association would rather have had a separate route where there would have been even less stress. That would have meant much more peace, but I would personally have found such special treatment a little abnormal."

She praised the idea of having such an area and an idea which board members of the association for the blind could become involved in. And the simplicity

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Information table in relief . . . Renate Koch at the Südpark.

(Photo: Beate Knappe)

■ LEISURE

Prince Iron Heart and the passionate collector

RHEINISCHER MERKUR

Siegmar Wansel collects, sells and publishes comics. There are 40,000 in his collection, which is stored in two rooms in a Cologne suburb, 20 kilometres from his flat.

It was a privilege for me to see it: I was only the fourth person to do so.

Many of the individual comics are worth as much as 2,000 marks — hence the security. The cellar, stacked to the ceiling with comics, is heavily locked and bolted. Comics are everywhere in boxes and chests. Everything is numbered. Only the path from the door to his desk is clear.

"Wyatt Earp", "Speedy" and "Lassy" are displayed on his desk. But he finds the drawings too plump. They lack detail. Which is why the Piccolo series of comics is his true love. "Connoisseurs know that Piccolos are the real comic strips," he said. Connoisseurs are only interested in the comics from the fifties and sixties.

Piccolos are the most sought after comics. They came out in 1953 in a seven and a half by seventeen centimetres format.

He has been more than a collector for some years now. He is the first specialist to have produced a systematic reference book for German comics and their production.

"His "Illustrated History of German Comics," published by his comic Zeit company since 1986, has gone into its ninth volume.

He visits all the large and small comic auctions and fairs. In July he was at the "International Comic-Salon" Erlangen - the most important comic fair. About 25,000 fans were there. They crowded into the town's castle and tents.

Among other things, they heard lectures on "The Investment Value of Comics," and "Comics and Their Readers." However Wansel was more interested in addding to his Piccolo collection. But they are rare and expensive.

He has about thirty of them in his collection. Among his Piccolos are "Akim Lord of the Jungle" - a Tarzan rip-off from the fifties - "Sigrud", the fighting knight, "Blitz", the newspaper boy and "Nick" the space traveller.

They are all post-war generation comics for children and have wonderfully simple themes. The good win and the bad lose. Siegmar then showed me the first Mickey Mouse comic published in Germany in 1951. It cost 75 pfennigs then. Today it will cost you DM800.

The essayist Sigmund von Radecki said: "Collecters are people who collect rareties in the hope that they will become even rarer."

This explains Wansel's flourishing comic business. For many people want to own a complete series. Demand like that makes good business.

A month ago a former publishing house employee wanted to sell his comic collection. Wansel bought 20,000 comics for a five figure sum. It took a fortnight to sort them out and to supply his customers.

His only personal collection comprises a series called Piccolos — and it is one of the best in Germany.

For him collecting is the hobby which became his livelihood. He had to train himself. Originally he worked as a draughtsman. He remembers how demanding the job was. It involved a lot of drawing. You could not afford to make a mistake.

At the age of 26 he was tired of it. He wanted to try something else. He decided to study photography. He did, for six years and got a degree. He then faced starting a new career from scratch.

Admittedly he had worked as a freelance draughtsman on the side. But he did not want a regular draughtsman's job again. Besides they were scarce. And he reckoned he could not compete with established photographers.

Instead he devoted himself in his sparetime to his hobby. He cannot explain why this became a passion. He said it just began to fascinate him.

"If I read a comic it reminds me of my childhood. If I see comics at kiosks I'll buy them if I can.

"In my childhood I found it attractive to read comics when I wasn't supposed to. I read them under the bed and in class."

In 1974 he was 25. He had not touched a comic for 13 years. He accidently came across a new edition of "Prince Iron Heart" in a railway station.

A collectors' magazine's advertisement aroused his interest. He started buying comics at flea markets. He bargained at comic auctions and advertised in specialist magazines. At the end of the first month he had more comics than he needed, so he sold the rest.

Selling comics became his livelyhood. It determines his daily routine. He gets up at nine, has breakfast at half past and at ten gets organised and reads the post. He then drives to the cellar where he processes his comic orders.

He has 2,000 customers. He takes care of about 150 orders a week. He organises the orders into bundles and puts bills on top. He finishes this at about eight in the evening.

He never feels lonely during work. He interrupts work to eat and to take care of other errands. Or he simply visits a friend.

Serious about comics . . . Siegmar Wansel. (Photo: Private)

At the end of year he has a profit in the till to which his publications contribute.

In the evenings Wansel is at his desk in his 40 square metre apartment. He has been living there for thirteen years since his student days. The tenth volume of his reference book should be out in September. Volume eleven of the first Winnetou series is coming out in December. The volumes have all the facts and figures you need.

Wansel intends to break into the advertising side of the business. His prospects are good. Libraries, science and book shops are interested in comics. It looks like they have a rosy future ahead of them.

Tasso Enzweiler

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 1 July 1988)

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of the orientation system was an attractive feature, even if its effectiveness was reduced through oversight.

These faults are being eliminated. After the show was over, the task of remoulding the gardens was handed over to a work group consisting of mentally and physically handicapped people.

There was some opposition because some city officials thought that handicapped people would be overtaxed.

They were wrong. The group was extremely efficient. It worked in conjunction with the parks and gardens department.

For Horst Borrmann, head of the work group, it had already been decided to improve the route for the blind and in conjunction with the association for the blind.

Now there are no more path signals that lead to nowhere; no more flowers that are out of reach.

And a suggestion that had been rejected on aesthetic grounds thatflower beds and flower pots be raised to make them more accessible, has been complied with. Borrmann said there had been "no problems."

The information tables and the information boxes now have to be adapted to the changed gardens. Everything is improved. Only the hostesses, who gave friendly help during the federal garden show, have gone. But who knows? Perhaps Herr Bortmann even has an idea to remedy that.

Ferdinand Quante

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 15 July 1988)

An Apache chief who remains a German hero

During the summer, television planners resort to an old trick to entice viewers from beaches back to the television sets.

They dig out Karl May westerns. (May is a German who, although he never went to America, wrote in the 19th century graphic novels about American Indians).

They are still as fresh and as entertaining as they were when they first appeared on television 25 years ago. Pierre Brice has the leading role as Winnetou, the Apache leader.

Brice is 59 years old. The indestructible actor is as evergreen as the films he acted in. Since 18 June he has been triumphing again as leading actor in the Karl May festival in Bad Segeberg (Bad Segeberg, north of Hamburg, runs open-air performances of Karl May stories every year).

For 25 years, Brice has been the embodiment of the noble Red Indian. Brice himself wrote the play "Winnetou the Apache" for Bad Segeberg. He made sure that he used original Red Indians sayings.

Brice remembers clearly, how the Berlin film producer, Horst Wendlandt, discovered him at the Berlin film festival in 1962. Wendlandt asked him to act Karl May. Brice had never even heard of Karl May. But he accepted the part after the role was explained to him. He acted with the late Lex Barker in 11 Karl May films. Barker, who died in 1973, played the white blood brother, Old Shatterhand.

Can Brice explain why generations of Germans have loved Karl May, and why today hundreds of thousands of them make the pilgrimage to the Karl May festival at Bad Segeberg?



Actor Brice, 59, still playing Winnetou. (Photo: dpa)

The native Frenchman says: "Winnetou is a positive hero who announces his message courageously, honestly and loyally. To him friendship is a philosophy of life and not a mere fashionable word.

"Germans love Winnetou, because he is the embodiment of a great dream, a man who remains true to himself and who risks his life for his friends."

Over the years Pierre Brice has added his own philosophy to the role. More perhaps than Karl May did. He described his understanding of the role as follows: "Winnetou's desire for peace is particularly relevant today. He talks to his enemies without fear of losing face. Karl May literature and Winnetou's philosophy should be compulsory reading for politicians. Perhaps politics would a more peaceful matter. Many politicans read Karl May as children. But they have forgotten Winnetou's words of wisdom."

Brice felt fortified when Manfred Wörner - NATO General Secretary - encouraged him to pass on Winnetou's message of peace to the young.

For years now, dark-haired Brice has been a televison hero for East German youth. The East Germans have a Karl May museum and with a gallery in Radebeul in Saxony. Pictures of Brice hang along with pictures of the author.

Herbert Graedtke, the director of the East German Karl May games in Rathen, invited Brice and his Red Indian tribesmen during a visit of the Segeberg festival, to take part in the Rathen games at the end of July. Brice's wife, Hella, says the East Germans love Winnetou. They get thousands of fan mail letters from them daily.

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